

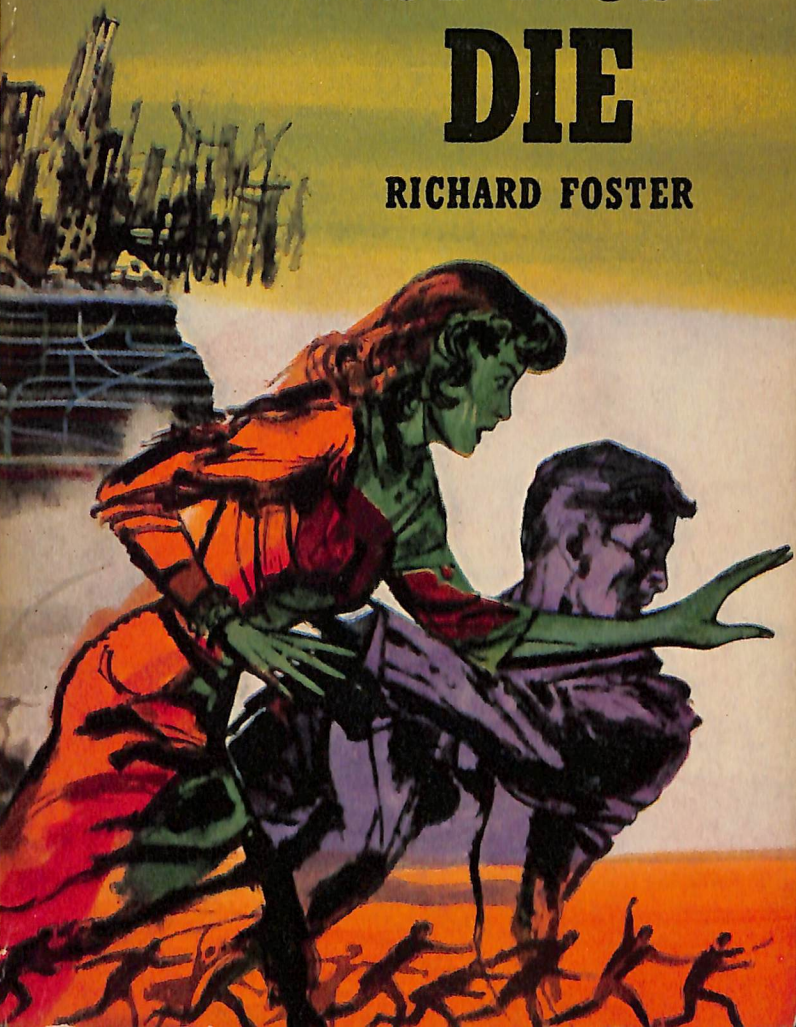


In the ruined subway tunnels  
weaving below the dead city  
the survivors fought each other  
like savage animals

35c

# THE REST MUST DIE

RICHARD FOSTER







*Someone screamed.*

It was a tall, pretty girl with long blonde hair. Her head was thrown back and her mouth was still open. Suddenly she ripped her sweater off and threw it away. She turned and jumped on the counter of a newsstand, standing poised like a dancer waiting for the music to begin, her arms lifted high over her head. Slowly, her arms came down to her skirt and it fell around her feet. She kicked it away. She reached up and unhooked her brassiere and then with one quick movement, she ripped the wisp of silk from her loins and let it fall.

"I don't want to die," the girl screamed.  
"I don't want to die when I haven't even lived.  
I want to be loved madly—madly—before I die."

She stopped and there wasn't a sound in the station, as if everyone had stopped breathing.

"Aren't there any men here?" the girl asked and her voice was like a whip. "Any *real* men?"

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# THE REST MUST DIE

*An Original Gold Medal Novel by*

**RICHARD FOSTER**

(KENDALL FOSTER CROSSON)



**Gold Medal Books**

**FAWCETT PUBLICATIONS, INC.**  
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FOR LISA  
WHO IS THE FUTURE



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is a story about something that has never taken place—although it could happen tomorrow, next year, five years hence, or a hundred years from now—and as such it is almost entirely drawn from imagination. The few facts, however, which relate to radiation, fallout and the more direct results of the dropping of several multimegaton bombs are as accurate as the author could make them, and for this he is deeply indebted to James R. Barnett, who spent many hours working out what might happen under the circumstances imagined by the author.

R. F.





## Chapter One

IT WAS one of those pleasant winter days that New York City gets once every couple of weeks. It was just cold enough to whiten your breath and quicken your step. Bob Randall had finished lunch and was on his way up Madison Avenue to his office. He was feeling pretty good, and not all of his good cheer was due to the three Martinis he'd had before lunch.

Bob Randall had been with the Chaber, Crossen and Monig advertising agency for five years. At thirty-five he was considered a "comer" and much of it was reflected in everything from his Brooks Brothers suit to the split-level house on Long Island where his wife and two children lived and which he visited between office hours. He had just finished an advertising campaign for the city of New York; it had been fun, but he knew that public service campaigns were not apt to do him a lot of good. However, he'd just been handed the new campaign for Alcino cigarettes and was now returning from his first luncheon with the client.

There was an extra spring to his step as he crossed 52nd Street. The client had been delighted with all of his ideas and he felt that this was the beginning for him. He wanted to get back to the office, call his wife Alice, and tell her how it had gone. Then he was going to start getting some of the ideas into more solid form. He knew what

he wanted in the way of rough layouts. He didn't think it would take the art department long to whip them out.

He'd just crossed the street when a hand slapped him on the back. "How's it going, boy?" a voice asked.

He looked around. It was Max Jones, an account executive with another agency in his building. They'd known each other for a couple of years.

"Hi, Max," he said. "How's it going?"

"You know how it is," Max said as they went on up the street together. "A buck here, a buck there. My only problem is I'm working on a vermouth account and have to look to see if there are any spies around whenever I order a very dry Martini. What's with you, boy?"

"Same old grind," Bob said. "I'm doing the new Alcino campaign. Just finished the spreads on Father Knickerbocker. It was an education. Did you know that there are forty-two acres of tracks beneath Grand Central Station?"

"Imagine that," Max said in mock surprise. "How many Martinis could you crowd into it?"

"Not enough," Bob answered. "Say, you live out on Long Island, don't you?"

"Sure. Wantaugh."

"Well, you know I'm over in Valley Stream. The wife and I are having a little party Saturday night. Why don't you and your wife come over?"

"Plenty of antifreeze?"

"Plenty."

"Then we'll be there. Have to look after the old motor, you know. Never met your executive vice-president. Got any kids?"

"Two," Bob said. He started to reach for his pocket and then remembered. "Just had new pictures taken of them, but I left them in the office. Boy and a girl. Five and two. Wonderful kids."

"Sure," Max said. "But put them to bed before the party starts. I hate to find a kid in my Scotch and soda. Did you hear the story about the difference between a duck—?"

Bob Randall's answer was lost, just as they reached 53rd Street, in the wavering wail of the Red Alert.

Despite the evidence of the clock, it was barely the beginning of the day for Connie Lomer. She'd gotten up an hour after noon and even that was early for her. But

she'd intended to go to the beauty parlor that afternoon. She'd had a cup of coffee and then the call had come from the bell captain in a midtown hotel. A Hollywood star had just checked into the hotel and wanted a girl. Connie hadn't wanted to take the date, but the bell captain pushed and she didn't dare say no. She depended on him too much to anger him. Besides, she told herself, she could use the eighty dollars she'd have after giving the captain his twenty.

She walked slowly down Fifth Avenue, occasionally stopping to look at her reflection in a store window. Her blonde hair was long, the curled ends brushing her shoulders. It was shining from the fast brushing she'd just given it. It was like a golden frame for the pert, pretty face that drew glances from almost every male who passed. She wore a black suit tailored to tactfully call attention to the curves beneath it—and it did so whenever her light coat swung open. She might have easily been taken for a college girl or a young businesswoman. This was what was on Connie's mind as she looked at herself in the big windows. How long, she asked herself every morning, could she continue to look like that? How long would it be before she would have to start cutting her prices and begin the long skid downward that she knew so many girls had taken? She would ask herself that, but then she'd quickly shove the subject out of her mind before she found an answer.

She was at 53rd Street and about to turn off Fifth Avenue when the sirens sounded.

Nancy Lynn stopped in a little shop at 54th Street and Madison Avenue and bought a pair of stockings. She really needed two pairs, but a quick check of her wallet told her that she wouldn't have enough money left to last until payday. She left the shop, pulling her cloth coat tight against the cold. She almost bumped into a little man who was hurrying along, his head down and a small package clutched in his hands. He lifted his head to mutter an apology and she recognized him as the bookkeeper in her office.

"Oh hello, Mr. Sanders," she said.

He peered at her, blinking his eyes rapidly. "Oh. It's Miss Lynn—Mr. Hudson's secretary, isn't it?" He asked the question uncertainly, for Herbert Sanders was never

too sure about the identities of his fellow employees. He would have had no trouble reeling off which names went with which social security numbers, but connecting a face and a name was another matter.

"That's right," Nancy said. "Going back to the office?"

"Yes."

"So am I," she said, falling in step with him. She glanced down at the package he carried. "Have you been shopping, too?"

"Y-yes," he said. He looked as if he were about to blush. "That is, I just bought a little something for myself. Not anything personal, of course."

"What is it?" she asked curiously.

He glanced at her. "You'll laugh at me."

"Of course I won't," she said seriously.

"Well," he said hesitatingly, "you see, my wife and I live out on Long Island near one of the missile launching sites. You know they use hydrogen or atomic warheads on those missiles and I've always worried about living near there, especially since Mrs. Sanders is not well. So I bought an instrument to detect radiation so that I can tell if it ever gets dangerous." He looked at her almost defiantly.

Nancy had a sudden picture of him going around his house with the instrument and she did have an impulse to giggle. She quickly suppressed it. "I think that's very considerate of you," she said. She went on only because she felt she had to say something that would lead away from the picture. "I didn't know you were married, Mr. Sanders."

"Oh yes," he said. "We have been married for twenty-seven years. Mrs. Sanders is a most wonderful wife."

"Any little ones?" Nancy asked.

"No. As I said, Mrs. Sanders has never been a well woman, so our home has not been blessed with the patter of little feet. But we have had other compensations." He sounded as if he would have trouble naming them if he were asked, so Nancy merely glanced at him and said nothing as they stopped at 52nd Street to wait for the light to change.

The Red Alert sounded.

It was also early for Rita Barnes to be out and she was in a bad mood. She was a small, attractive brunette who was a singer temporarily at liberty. She was usually at



liberty. She would work occasionally as a hat-check girl or cashier between engagements, which was the way she preferred to think of the lack of singing jobs. In addition to those small amounts, she had several boy friends who were generous about taking her out to dinner or frequently bringing huge bags of food from the delicatessen.

Most people who knew Rita thought of her as always laughing. But now her face was set in sullen lines. In a weak moment the night before she had promised one of her boy friends that she would shop for a present for him to give to his secretary. It had been an unusual reaction for Rita; usually it was the men who ran errands for her. But he had just loaned her the money for next month's rent and she'd been betrayed by a fleeting generous whim. Then she hadn't been able to get to sleep until six in the morning and the early afternoon crowd in Macy's was getting on her nerves. She was angry for having promised, feeling that he had exploited her.

She stormed her way through to a perfume counter. Then, without paying any attention to what kind it was, she picked out a ten-dollar bottle of perfume and ordered it sent to the secretary. She took a little more time in picking out a somewhat larger bottle for herself and then had both put on her friend's charge plate.

"I don't care," she muttered to herself in response to an ever so slight twinge of guilt.

Somewhat mollified by the unexpected present she'd given herself, Rita turned away to leave. She was halfway down the subway steps when the big siren screamed.

Not far away in Gimbels, Johnny Larson had also been trying to shop. He was a short, heavy-set young man in his early thirties who looked and felt out of place wandering around the women's sections of the store. Normally he would have been at work on the waterfront, but his pier wasn't working that day. The next weekend was his girl's birthday and it was this occasion that had brought him reluctantly to Gimbels.

There were very few situations in which Johnny didn't feel capable of taking care of himself—but this was one of them. He'd had no idea of what to get her, but thought he'd see something when he got to the store. The more he looked, however, the less he was sure she'd like anything there.

"To hell with it," he finally said. He bought a gift certificate as quickly as he could and headed for the subway. By then he just wanted to get downtown to his favorite saloon and have a beer. He was buying a token when he heard the sirens.

Bob Randall had one foot off the curb when the wail smote his ears. He automatically pulled it back. "We'd probably better take cover," he said to Max Jones. "That's the Red Alert."

"To hell with it," Max said. "They're always pulling these things. Come on. We can make it to the office all right and if it's still on take shelter on whatever floor we're supposed to."

"The twentieth," Bob said automatically. He glanced out into Madison Avenue where a cop was blowing his whistle and waving all the cars over to the curb. "No, we'd better not. I'm an assistant air-raid warden and it won't look good if I ignore the rules."

"Don't be a Boy Scout all your life," Max snapped. "It won't get you anything. Come on."

But the matter was settled for them by the cop who had suddenly noticed the two of them standing there talking while others on the street were hurrying to various shelters. "Hey, you two," he bellowed, "d'ya think that siren's the sign to have a talk over tea? Take shelter till you hear the all clear."

"Damn," Max said.

Bob looked around. The nearest shelter was the Independent subway, only a few doors from where they stood. He led the way, with Max still grumbling as they went down the stairs. On the first level, the newsstand was still open. Bob stopped long enough to buy a paper.

"Might as well have something to read while we're waiting," he said.

Down by the change booth the exit doors were open and the change-maker was out of his booth. He was wearing a warden's helmet and directing people through the doors.

"Let's stay up here," Max suggested. "Then we can be the first ones out when the all clear sounds."

"He won't let us," Bob said. "We're supposed to go down to the train level."

Both escalators were running down, but they were still crowded. Bob and Max joined others who were walking down the long flight of stairs.

"It's a lot of damn foolishness," Max grumbled. "Pulling these practice raids in the middle of the day when we're all busy."

"You probably just finished a two hour luncheon," Bob said with a smile, "so you can throw away another fifteen minutes on this. None of the practice raids have gone off very well and one day it may not be a practice drill."

"Who's going to be foolish enough to bomb us?" demanded Max. "We got the missiles to blow them off the face of the earth."

"That's right, buddy," another man said beside them. "This is a waste of time."

By this time they had reached the train level. Bob opened his paper and looked at it, leaving Max Jones and the other man to discuss the air-raid warnings. The subway platform was slowly filling up as others came down the stairs to join them. Many of the men and women were grumbling just as loudly as Max.

It seemed to Bob that the paper was full of the same things he'd been reading for years. Secretary of State Henderson thought that a meeting of the foreign ministers might do more for international peace than anything the United Nations could do. Secretary of Commerce Jones stated that while there was some unemployment, the recession was still less than it had been under the previous two administrations. Just below that, former presidents Truman and Eisenhower were quoted as saying that wasn't true. Bob gave up on the news and turned until he reached the first Broadway columnist.

It was impossible at this depth to tell if the sirens were still blaring. The only sound in the subway was the irritating buzz of everyone talking at once.

The first explosion seemed distant and far away, but even it made the walls tremble and the lights flicker. And suddenly everyone in the subway was quiet, looking at the others with fear in their eyes.

"Probably just the army shooting practice missiles," someone said, but he didn't sound as though he believed it himself. Bob thought it sounded like Max Jones, but when he looked around he didn't see Max anywhere.

In the silence there was a sudden clatter as another man came racing down the stairs, ignoring the now empty escalators. The man was running, his mouth open as though he couldn't get enough air. He was holding a newspaper in his hands and was carefully shredding it to pieces even as he ran, completely unaware of what he was doing.

"Oh my God," he said as he reached the bottom of the stairs. He stared at the crowd of people. "Oh my God. They're doing it. I just saw the first one—somewhere out toward Long Island. A great big goddam mushroom of smoke and fire. I saw it."

There was no sound in the subway except a giant sigh like a high wind. It was as though everyone there had gasped at the same time.

"A million times brighter than the sun," the newcomer said. His eyes were wide with fear. "Jesus. Do you suppose I'll go blind because I saw it?"

Somewhere in the subway a woman screamed, her voice high and shrill. It was a signal to break the silence that had gripped the others. They all began talking and shouting at once. Little groups in the crowd began to surge one way and another until the mass of people resembled the writhing of some wounded monster.

The words of the man who had seen the bomb struck Bob Randall like a physical blow. The only thing he could think of was that the bomb had fallen on Long Island—and that was where his wife and two children were. Something within him wanted to shout that it was impossible, but he knew it was probably true. And if there had been one bomb there would probably be others.

Then the movement of the crowd dragged him out of his thoughts and he at once saw the danger. He hesitated only a minute. Then he straightened up, waved his newspaper wildly in the air to attract attention, and shouted as loudly as he could.

"Quiet," he cried. "Quiet." He continued to shout the one word over and over, whipping his newspaper over his head.

At first his words seemed to bounce off the crowd. Then slowly those nearest him became aware of his voice and quieted down, turning toward him. As they did, others farther away heard him and turned too. Within a



few minutes the subway was once more quiet, but Bob knew it couldn't last long. There was a bench not far from where he stood. He made his way to it quickly and got up on it so they could all see him.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I think it is probably true that this Red Alert is not a practice drill, but that is even more reason why we must not panic. Please try to stand quietly. I seem to recall that this subway station is far enough underground to be safe even in the case of a close hit, so don't get frightened."

"But he said the bomb hit in Long Island," a woman said hysterically. "My family is there."

"Mine too," a man shouted. "I've got to get out there."

"Quiet," Bob shouted quickly before others could start. "I know how you feel. My own family is on Long Island—my wife and two small children . . ." For a minute his own voice almost broke; then it got stronger as he went on. "But there is nothing we can do about it now. There is no way that any of us can get to Long Island while the attack is on." *Nor afterward either*, a small voice within him added, but he kept it inside of him. "I am an air-raid warden," he said. "Are there any others here?"

"Here," several voices shouted. About ten hands shot up in the air from various spots.

"Station yourselves along the platform," Bob said. "There very likely may be other bombs which will get through."

As though in answer to him, there was another explosion. This one was closer and the whole platform seemed to rock. Again the crowd stirred in fear, but Bob Randall and the other volunteers soon had them quieted.

"Will all of you who have newspapers pass them over to me and the other wardens," Bob said. Immediately hands began passing along various papers. "It is very possible," he went on to explain, "that a bomb may knock out the electrical system and we can use the newspapers as torches for a time." He soon had a thick bundle of papers and looking down the platform he could see that the others did too.

After that there were five more explosions at regular intervals, each of them as bad as the second one. But the people in the subway remained fairly quiet. The shock of the first bomb was now past and they were all trying to

face a world they didn't believe in. For almost as many years as most of them could remember they had been living with atomic bombs, in a world of two strong powers armed with nuclear weapons. But they had told themselves that the Enemy wouldn't dare use them because we could retaliate. Their leaders had told them the same things. And leading editorial writers had gone on at great length about the perfect stalemate which would have to produce peace. After several years of fear, everyone had started believing that neither side would dare to drop the bomb. Now it had been dropped—several of them had been dropped.

Maybe the horror stories had been right; maybe there was no longer a proud city above the surface of the ground; maybe their loved ones were already dead or dying of radiation burns. But first they had to face that this was a different world than the one in which they had lived until only a few minutes earlier. Once they had done that each of them could return to his own private horror and grief. But in facing the new world they had found a temporary courage that was holding them together.

"My God," someone muttered near Bob, "what is this going to do to New York?"

Bob knew that the same thought had been in the back of his mind. The bombs were certainly atomic and possibly hydrogen. He knew the theory that one bomb could destroy New York City. Seven had been dropped so far. His own imagination balked at the thought.

Then the eighth bomb struck. It seemed to Bob that the subway platform tilted and he could feel the wall shivering against his back. There was a silent blast of air from the subway tunnel. Then the sound struck, numbing the senses until it seemed more like a physical blow than a noise. The lights blinked out.

It seemed that time stood still—a period in time where there was no sight or sound. For a moment Bob thought he was falling but he pressed his shoulders tightly against the uncertain wall and managed to stay on the bench. From somewhere overhead water dripped down on his head.

Then slowly hearing returned to him and he became aware that the darkness in front of him was filled with screaming, fighting people. He switched the newspapers under his arm and managed to get one paper twisted into

a long roll. He got matches and lighted the paper. He held the blazing torch over his head.

It looked as if a third of the people were down on the tracks, most of them trying to climb back on the platform and being pushed or pulled down. Those who were still on the platform were struggling blindly with each other as they tried to run in haphazard directions.

Another light sprang into existence a few feet down the platform, then another flickered beyond it. Bob Randall breathed silent thanks for the others who were helping. Then he began waving his own torch and shouting down at the faceless struggling mob.

Other burning newspapers joined the flaming three and slowly, under the influence of light and the shouts of the volunteer wardens, the crowd began to quiet down. But Bob had lighted his third torch before they were quiet enough for him to be heard.

"All right," he said hoarsely, making an effort to control the anger he felt toward them all, "help those other people up from the tracks."

Several people near the edge reached down and helped the others up. But when they were finished there were several persons lying across the tracks.

"Is there a doctor here?" Bob Randall asked.

"I'm a doctor," a man said. He pushed a little nearer and Bob saw that his coat and shirt had been ripped from his body and there was a bruise on one cheek. "But I don't have anything with me—"

"Go look at those people down on the tracks," Bob said. "Here, somebody take a paper torch and help him."

Another man stepped forward. He took a newspaper from Bob and went with the doctor. Several minutes later they were back. Four of the people were dead, from heart attacks, the doctor thought. The others had merely fainted. Several volunteers were already helping to revive them. A number of people were injured, but none of the injuries appeared to be serious.

There were no more explosions. After waiting twenty minutes—the crowd now standing in stunned silence—Bob decided to do something.

"I want two men to check upstairs and see if an all clear has sounded," he said.

"I'll go," said a man standing in front of him. Bob

looked at him and decided he wasn't the hysterical type. He nodded.

"Okay," he said. "Go check the Fifth Avenue entrance."

The man started pushing through the crowd towards the other end of the platform.

"I—I will go to the Madison Avenue exit," another voice said. It came from right beside Bob's bench.

He looked down and saw a small middle-aged man peering up at him through glasses. A package was still clutched in his hands. Bob didn't think he looked too competent, but at least he didn't seem to be in a panic. He nodded and Herbert Sanders turned for the stairs.

There was another wait. The people on the platform were beginning to get restless again. The man who had gone to Fifth Avenue was the first to return. He edged through the crowd until he stood beside the bench.

"No good," he said in a hoarse whisper. It was obvious he was smart enough to try to keep the others from hearing him. "The exit is completely blocked. It looks like the whole building up there collapsed."

Bob nodded. "We'll wait and see about the other. How about clearing it if we have to?"

"Maybe it could be done, but it would be quite a job even with all of us."

It was a few minutes later when Herbert Sanders came back down the stairs. He came straight to Bob.

"I very much fear," he said, "that the exit up there is blocked. It was impossible to proceed farther than the newsstand."

"Well I guess that settles it," Bob said, looking at the other man. "We'll have to try to dig our way out."

"Excuse me," Herbert Sanders said. He tugged at Bob's coat. "Excuse me, Mr.—"

"Randall," Bob said automatically.

"Excuse me, Mr. Randall, but I fear it would not be wise to try to dig out of the exits here."

"Why not?" Bob asked. He looked down at the little man, trying to keep the irritation out of his face.

"Because the amount of radiation is much too high. It would be very dangerous for any of us to go out on the street here."

"How do you know?"

"I have an ion chamber to detect radiation," Herbert

said. He'd already taken it from the package; now he removed it from his pocket and showed it.

"What's going on?" a man shouted from the crowd. "Is the air raid over or ain't it?"

"Yeah, we want to get out of here," another voice said.

Bob Randall looked at the crowd and took a deep breath. "Both exits," he said, "are completely blocked. And I have just been told that the amount of radiation outside is dangerous. We can't leave by either exit."

## Chapter Two

WHEN THE FIRST BOMB went off Johnny Larson was down in Pennsylvania Station on the Long Island level with several hundred other people. The realization that an actual bomb had been dropped was just as much of a shock to him as to them. His first thought was of his girl Anita at work in her office uptown. But he quickly realized there was nothing he could do about reaching her and that she was probably in some air-raid shelter. He turned his attention to what was happening. By the time the second bomb had been dropped he was more thoroughly adjusted to it than anyone else. Johnny Larson had been raised on hard knocks and he found it easy to accept the fact that one person, or one country, might try giving another one his lumps no matter how dangerous it might be.

There were a number of regular air-raid wardens in the station and even those were augmented by several policemen. They didn't have too much trouble reassuring the waiting people and keeping them in good order.

Johnny Larson leaned against the wall and watched and waited. It was then that he saw a thin, sharp-faced youth work into the edge of one group and get next to a well-dressed man. Johnny had seen too many pickpockets at work not to know what was going on. Normally, he would have merely watched with amusement, but now he walked quickly over and tapped the youth on the shoulder. The little pickpocket looked around, his face a mixture of fear and bravado.

"Take it easy, kid," Johnny said. "I ain't no cop. It's just that it ain't so smart in here. The sucker finds out his dough is missing and you ain't got no place to run. The way it's going up there you won't have any place to spend it anyway."

The pickpocket's face filled with a different fear. "Yeah, I guess you're right," he said. He moved out of the group, Johnny beside him. "I guess I was just nervous and I thought maybe I'd feel better if I worked a little."



"Sure," Johnny said soothingly. "But just take it easy until this thing is over."

He went back to lean against his wall and the little pickpocket followed him. "What's your racket, pal?" he asked.

"I'm a working stiff," Johnny said, "but I mind my own business."

"Sure, Johnny, I was just asking."

"How did you know my name was Johnny?"

"Didn't," the pickpocket said. "I call everybody Johnny. Makes it easier. My name's Eddie. Only some guys call me Pockets. I can take anything out of a pocket and never get caught. You want to see me?"

"No," Johnny said. "It ain't the time for it."

"Yeah," Eddie said. "Pretty tough, huh? You think we're all going to get knocked off?"

"Lots of people are," Johnny said.

Another bomb fell and it was obvious that this one was much nearer. Fear became greater through the crowd. But the wardens and cops moved quickly to calm them.

It was a few minutes later that a newcomer came stumbling down the stairs that led from the upper level of the station. One hand covered his face with the fingers spread.

"Oh my God," he was screaming. "I can hardly see. Help me, someone."

A warden and a cop rushed over to him and took him by the arms. Johnny Larson moved a little nearer.

"I thought I ought to get to a better shelter," the man was babbling. "I was out on the street when they dropped that last bomb. It must've been near the Brooklyn Bridge. Oh my God, the light—like nothing you've ever seen—and fires leaped up as far north as Twentieth Street. I was looking right at it and now I can hardly see. Do you think I'll be blind?"

The warden and the officer looked at each other and shrugged. Then they led him away to a first-aid station that had been set up in a waiting room.

"You think he's going to be blind?" Eddie asked nervously.

"Probably," Johnny said, shrugging. "Maybe there won't be anything to see anyway."

The bombs continued to drop. It was the fifth one that produced a deafening crash as the top of Pennsylvania

Station crashed down on the upper level, sending dust drifting down the stairs. There was a hurried consultation of the wardens and police and then they moved quietly among the people.

"For extra safety," one of the wardens announced as he approached the section where Johnny and Eddie waited, "we are moving part of you downstairs to the train level and the others across to the Sixth Avenue subway. This group will go to Sixth Avenue."

"Suits me," Johnny said. "I never liked Long Island anyway." The warden came nearer motioning them to follow him. "Any news get through here at all?" Johnny asked him.

The warden looked at him sharply and then decided to answer. "Some. The bombs are coming in on missiles. We've shot down a lot of them, but some are getting through."

"They sure are," Johnny said. He and Eddie followed the crowd that was going with the warden. Then Johnny touched the pickpocket on the arm. "Wait a minute," he said.

There was a small, attractive girl leaning against the wall not far from the Seventh Avenue subway line. Johnny had noticed her before. She was still standing in the same position, her face white with fear.

"What's the matter, honey?" he asked. "Worried about your family?"

She looked at him blankly and nodded. "My mother," she said. She knew as she said it that it wasn't true. Her mother did live in Staten Island, but she hadn't thought once about her since the bombs started falling. She was afraid for herself, but she couldn't admit that.

"Come along with us, honey," Johnny said. "We're all going over to sit it out together in the Sixth Avenue subway."

Obediently she fell in to step with him and they rejoined the little pickpocket.

"I'm Johnny Larson," Johnny said, sensing that just having someone to talk with would make her feel better. "This is Eddie—"

"Herman," the little pickpocket said.

"I'm Rita Barnes," the girl said. She sounded grateful. "What do you think will happen?"

"Just more big booms," Johnny said. "God, I wish I had a beer."

They followed the warden through the long underground tunnel and reached the Sixth Avenue subway just as another bomb hit and the lights went out.

## Chapter Three

THERE WAS A MOMENT of stunned silence in the 53rd Street station after Bob Randall had announced that there was no way for them to leave. Then everyone started to talk at once, only to break off suddenly as though of them realized they had nothing to say. As though pulled by a string, every face turned to look at Bob.

Looking down at the faces, he realized that they were all still suffering from shock and were turning to him as the only visible sign of authority. Later there would be trouble. He was aware that the same signs of shock were probably on his face too; he knew that his wife and children were unquestionably dead, but he felt little emotion. And he resented the responsibility he was accepting.

"There is one thing we can do," he said to the people in front of him, his mind racing ahead to possibilities and remembering the work he had just finished. "We can start walking downtown along the tracks. There is no electricity and it will be safe. We can see how it is at the next station, which will be Fiftieth Street. If the radiation is too high there, we can go on."

"How will we know if it's high?" somebody asked.

"There's a man here who has an instrument with him," Bob said.

"What if we can't get out anywhere?" another voice asked. "It may stay too high for several days."

Bob Randall took a deep breath. He was pretty certain that it would be many days before they could go above ground; it might be that they never could, but he wasn't certain about that. However it was better not to speak any of those thoughts.

"If that happens," he said carefully, "then we can go on down to Pennsylvania Station and stick it out there."

"Maybe we'd beter not walk down the tracks," someone said. The voice was high and shaky. "There might be enough of it along there to kill us."

"I don't think so," Bob said. "I just finished some work on the underground part of New York City and they claim

that most parts of the Independent subway system are safe. But I will be walking at the front and the gentleman who has the ion chamber will be with me. So if it's dangerous we'll know in time to turn back. Now the only light we'll have will have to come from the newspaper torches as long as they last. Some of you air-raid wardens stay with the center of the group, the rest of you bring up the rear. Try to make your newspapers last as long as possible."

The light from the paper torches wasn't enough to enable him to see too well along the length of the station, but the wardens farther away waved their torches to show they understood.

Bob looked down at the little man who still stood near him. "What did you say your name was?"

"Herbert Sanders."

"All right, you come with me, Herb." He looked out at the row of faces in front of him. "I'll need someone else to help me with my papers."

"I'll do it," a voice near him said.

He looked down and saw a girl about five-feet-two, with fairly long black hair and a face that was extremely pretty despite the strain which now marked it.

"All right," he said. "What's your name?"

"Nancy Lynn."

"Okay, Nancy. I'm Bob Randall," he said to her and the little man on his other side. He looked up at the others. "I'll go down on the tracks first, then the rest of you follow me, two at a time, starting at this end. Don't jump down until it's your turn. We won't start leaving the station until everyone is down and lined up. So don't rush. We've got plenty of time."

"Maybe time is all we got," somebody said and three or four people giggled hysterically.

Bob Randall stepped down from the bench and motioned the girl and the little man to follow him. He stepped through the crowd and hopped down into the roadbed of the track. He turned and helped the girl down. They started walking toward the front end of the station.

"All right," Bob Randall called back. "The rest of you start following, two by two."

He watched for a minute until he was sure they were obeying, then he went ahead with the other two. They were able to walk comfortably side by side between the

rails, but he decided not to change the order he had already given the others. If they walked in twos they'd have more room and any sort of crowding might be dangerous.

When they reached the very end of the station, they stopped and watched the people leaving the platform and gathering down on the tracks. It was a weird sight in the flickering glare of the dozen torches.

Bob made another torch with one hand and lit it from the stub of his old one. He handed the thick bundle of papers to the girl. As he did so, he noticed the small paper bag she held.

"What do you have there?" he asked.

"Stockings," she said. "I guess I don't need them now." Her face worked as if she might laugh.

"Steady," he said. He looked over at the man. "How's the ion chamber working?"

"Fine," Herbert said. "There isn't any radiation here. I believe that we are not apt to find any serious amount down here. I think that wherever there is more than one right angle in the entrance, the radiation may not penetrate."

"Plenty of it up above though, huh?" Bob said. "How much would you say there is on the street level?"

"There's no way of telling. The ion chamber doesn't go above fifty roentgens per hour. I think I counted at least seven explosions and there might have been more. I imagine the bombs must have been somewhere in the megaton range, so there would be several thousand roentgens."

Bob looked at him with interest. "Where did you learn all that?"

"I read it," Herbert admitted. "I like to read and I have read quite a bit on the subject."

"He lives near a missile launching site," the girl explained.

"You two know each other?" Bob asked in surprise.

"We work in the same office," Nancy said. She gave a little laugh. "I guess I should say worked."

"I'm afraid so," Herbert said. "Some of the bombs were probably no more than five or six miles away and that would mean that most every building up on the street is demolished."

By this time the platform was empty. All the people were stretched back between the rails in a long line.



"Stay close together," Bob shouted back at them. "You may find it easier if each of you puts his hand on the shoulder of the person in front of you. Let's go."

He turned and started into the tunnel. Nancy was on one side of him, Herbert on the other. The torch he held threw plenty of light for them to see where they were going. Bob set a good pace.

"You seem to know a lot about this sort of stuff," he said to Herbert. "What do you think?"

Herbert couldn't remember when anyone had asked him what he thought, except when it referred to ledger books. He swelled with pride. "You mean how it is above ground?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well," Herbert said, "I don't really know too much about it. Just what I've read, you know. And it was impossible to get any idea of direction from the explosions, although we do know that one was on Long Island. That fellow who came running down late. We know that one he saw was quite near. But even if the others that got through were all bunched together, I imagine that all of New York City is destroyed, as well as a large area around us." His voice broke a little as he realized what he was saying. "Those of us who have survived in the subways may be the only ones left in the city."

"That's what I've been thinking," Bob said soberly. He was aware that what they were saying was still only words and that the realization was still to come. "I remember reading a long time ago that one bomb would destroy the city and there were at least seven."

"They must have missed Manhattan," Herbert said, taking refuge in remembering and reciting, "because I doubt if we would be here if they'd hit that near. And probably none of them dropped in water."

"Why do you say that?"

"There could have been tidal waves forty or fifty feet high for miles and the subways would be flooded. Although no one knows for sure."

"It's a damn good thing you're along with us," Bob said. "You've got a lot of information that even we wardens didn't get. I have an idea it'll come in very handy."

Herbert threw back his shoulders and marched more erectly.

Nancy rolled a new torch and lit it from the old one, then handed it to Bob.

"It'll be a long time before it'll be safe up there, won't it?" Bob asked, his voice low.

"I think so," Herbert said. He felt an urge to pose as more of an authority than he was, but resisted it. "I believe it might be possible to spend fifteen or twenty minutes above ground without serious results within two or three days. But I think it will be perhaps a year before anyone can search the area or stay above ground long enough to walk out of the city."

"I thought so," Bob said.

"What are you two talking about?" Nancy said. "Don't you know that you're saying that we might as well have stayed on the street? That we'll have to just stay down here and starve to death?"

"That's not true," Bob said quickly. "In the first place, we're just guessing what it's like up above. There may be places where we can get out. Besides there are places where there is enough food to feed a lot of people. I don't really know how long but for some time."

"How do you know?" she asked.

"I just finished an advertising campaign for the city of New York which included learning everything about the underground city. At the time I thought it was a waste of time, but now I'm beginning to think otherwise."

They came to a place where the tracks forked and Bob took the left-hand tunnel without any hesitation.

"Why this one?" Nancy asked.

"This is the Sixth Avenue track, the other is the Eighth Avenue," he said. "I'm sure that all of Pennsylvania Station is pretty safe, but we want to end up on the Sixth Avenue side."

They continued to walk down the tracks, with Nancy giving him a fresh torch each time the one he held burned down. Several times he looked back and saw the others were following in an orderly fashion.

They were almost at the Fiftieth Street station when they encountered the rear end of a stalled train. Bob stopped and passed the information back along the line. By going single-file they could work their way around the train.

Bob went ahead with his torch, with Nancy right behind

him, and Herbert after her. The others followed. They were still inching along between the train and third rail when Bob glimpsed the platform on the other side of the train. The doors on both sides of the car next to him were open. There were also a couple of dead bodies sprawled over the third rail. The train must have stopped when the bombing started and before the electricity went off.

He stopped and passed the word back for the line to wait. He handed his torch to Nancy and then bent to move the bodies over out of the way. He straightened up and asked her for a fresh torch. She gave it to him and he boosted himself up to the open door of the car.

"I'll be back in a minute," he said. "I want to see if there's anyone here."

Standing up in the car, he took a look out at the platform. It seemed completely empty except for several bodies. He walked quickly down through the cars toward the front. When he reached the first car, he went to the motorman's cab. The door was open. He looked in and searched around for a minute and then breathed a sigh of relief when he found what he was looking for. It was a flashlight. He clicked it on and put his torch on the floor and stamped the fire out. Then he left the train, stepping out onto the platform.

There was no sign of life in any of the bodies on the platform. They all looked as if they'd been beaten or trampled on. He ran quickly up the stairs to the next level. Here there were more dead bodies. One section of the iron fence that led off from the turnstiles was down, a twisted hunk of metal. Beyond, the glass in the store windows was broken. There were more bodies near the fence and near the windows. But there was no living person in sight.

It seemed to Bob that he could guess what had happened. The people here had panicked, probably two or three hundred of them, had rushed blindly upstairs and charged through the fence. There had been enough of them so that the sheer weight of their bodies had twisted the iron. And in the mad rush many of them had died, crushed against the metal fence or trampled under hundreds of feet.

He turned and went back down stairs. He soon found the car with doors open on both sides. He could see the

glimmer of the torches on the far side. He crossed over and dropped down beside Nancy.

"No one there," he said. "Looks as if they all got frightened and ran out."

"Where'd you get the flashlight?" she wanted to know.

"In the motorman's cab. I thought there might be one there and went searching for it. Let's go."

Using the flashlight made it much easier as they went on around the train. They were soon back in the center of the track and Bob passed the word back for them to form in twos again.

It wasn't far to the next station, which was Forty-second Street. Even before they reached it, they could hear someone shouting. As they neared the platform the flashlight picked out a bunch of people huddled together. It looked as if there were about fifty of them.

"You've come to rescue us," someone cried hysterically as Bob came up even with them.

"We're looking to be rescued ourselves," Bob said drily. "We've just walked down from the Fifth Avenue station. Is this all there are of you?"

"There were more of us," a man said. "I don't know how many, but they left after there weren't any more explosions. The rest of us were afraid to try it."

"That was the smartest thing you could have done," Bob said. "No lights of any kind?"

"No. Those of us who had matches lit them until we ran out. I can tell you it was mighty good to see your lights coming—even if you're not a rescue team."

"I'm sure we know the answer," Bob said to Herbert, "but run up and take a reading." He helped Herbert up to the platform and watched him as he went toward the exits.

"Where's he going?" someone on the platform asked.

"He has a measuring device," Bob said. "He's going to take a reading. But don't expect anything."

A few minutes later, Herbert was back. He shook his head as everyone looked at him, but didn't say anything until he was back beside Bob.

"One exit is only partially blocked," he said, "but the reading is so high I didn't even get near. I could see outside and it looked as if even the sidewalk was on fire. I suppose I could have checked closer . . ."

"No," Bob said. "It's better not to. We may be letting you expose yourself too much as it is."

"I don't think so. I don't believe the few seconds will hurt me and it was no more than that."

"All right," Bob said. He looked up at the people on the platform. "We're going on to Penn Station. Drop down at the end of the line, two at a time."

He started again and Nancy and Herbert fell into step with him. The enormity of their situation was steadily growing upon all of them and they didn't do much talking. Bob was wondering what they would find at the next station. He knew if they had any hope of survival at all it would be there or back at Grand Central Station.

And so they all walked quietly through the tunnel, the thin shaft of the flashlight boring ahead and the torches flaring and dying spasmodically along the line of walkers.

It wasn't long before they could see flickering lights ahead. Their own lights must have been sighted for the other lights began to wave frantically. Bob signaled an answering by clicking his flashlight on and off several times.

Another hundred yards and they left the tunnel, entering the station. There were about a dozen men on the platform. Three of them had flashlights while the others were using improvised torches.

"Where are you coming from?" one of the men asked as Bob came up to where he stood.

"Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street stations," Bob said.

"A lot of radiation up there?"

"Not in the stations. But there didn't seem any point in just standing there, so we headed for here."

"How many of you?"

"I don't know," Bob said. "I'd guess about three hundred."

"What about the other stations?"

"Fiftieth Street was the only other one we passed. Nobody alive there. It looked as if all of them had rushed out onto the street."

"Jesus," the man said fervently. "Well, you might as well go on upstairs. We got two or three thousand up there. We're staying down here to watch for anyone coming along the tracks."

Bob nodded and climbed up on the platform. He gave his hand to Nancy and pulled her up. Herbert followed. Bob helped a few more reach the platform. The third one up was a pretty blonde girl. He noticed her limping as she stepped on the platform.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

The girl looked down at her high-heeled shoes and smiled ruefully. "I guess these shoes weren't made for track walking," she said.

"Kick them off," Bob said. "You can walk on the concrete without them. We'll do something about getting you other shoes. Some of you men help the others up and then follow us." He turned and started up the stairs. Nancy, Herbert, the blonde girl and three others went with him. The others, as soon as they reached the platform, hurried after them.

There was some light on the next level, but not much. The people there had found four or five kerosene lanterns which were hung in various spots. Most of the people were gathered somewhere near the lanterns, huddled in groups on the floor. They were quiet and apathetic and all shared the look of shock. A few men with flashlights walked back and forth among them.

A policeman met Bob as he came through the subway exit gates.

"How many of you?" he asked wearily.

"About three hundred, I think," Bob said. "From the Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street stations. Who's in charge here?"

"Well," the cop said, "there ain't any one person in charge. There are ten or twelve men from the Force and maybe fifteen wardens. We've been taking care of things."

"Where do you want us to go?"

"Any place," the cop said. "Just find a place where you can all sit down and take it easy until it's safe to get out of here."

Bob looked at him in amazement. "And just when will that be?" he asked.

"I don't know. We ain't had any reports from outside yet."

"Tell me," Bob said, trying to keep the irritation out of his voice, "just what have you been doing here?"

The cop must have heard some of the tone anyway for he looked at Bob sharply. "We've gotten everybody calmed



down. And believe me that was some job. And we located a couple of doctors in the crowd. We got a few cases of flash burns from people who didn't make the shelter before some of the bombs went off."

"We've probably got one, too," Bob said. He looked around at the group gathering behind him. He finally spotted one man whose face looked as if he had a sunburn. "Yes, there he is. What should we do about him?"

"Nothing," the cop said. "The doctor says he has nothing for treatment. It won't hurt him much and it'll pass in a few hours."

"All right," Bob said. He looked around. To the right there was a large space near a soft drink stand that was completely unoccupied. The reason probably was that it was fairly dark there, not being near any of the hanging lights. He motioned for his group to follow him and led the way over to it.

"You might as well sit down on the floor and get what rest you can," he said.

The people in his group crowded around and sat on the floor without any protest. The only reaction they showed was a desire to be close to each other, but for the most part their faces remained devoid of expression.

"How is it in here?" Bob asked Herbert, keeping his voice low.

Herbert switched on his instrument and peered at it. "About one thousandth of one roentgen," he said. "That's safe enough."

"You can't tell from that what it is outside?"

"No. I'd have to know how many feet it is to the surface and exactly what sort of material is between us and the street. Even then I'm not sure I could work it out. Want me to check the entrances?"

Bob nodded. Herbert ran out and was back a few minutes later. "It's high," he said. "Much higher than my instrument will show."

"Okay," Bob said, "I'm going to take a look around."

He'd already noticed that almost all the people in the station were in five large groups concentrated around the hanging lights. There were a few small groups away from them, but even they weren't too far from the sources of light. This placed all of them near the tunnel that led toward the Long Island Railway and Penn Station proper. Bob turned and walked north.

He thought, as he walked, about his conversation with the cop. Somehow he had expected to find everything well organized when they reached this station. In a way it was, but he'd been surprised to find that the policeman seemed to have no realization of how serious the situation was. Or he did know and thought it was important to keep others from knowing. Either way, it might cause serious reactions later. There might be, he thought—there *must* be—some others who recognized the situation for what it was. But perhaps they, too, were still too much in shock to do anything yet.

He reached the entrance to the basement of Saks and stopped to look inside. At first all he could see was row after row of dresses. But then he saw a movement and spotted two little old ladies, still standing behind the counters which displayed lingerie. He opened the door and walked inside. He then saw there were several racks of men's jackets and there was one whole section devoted to women's shoes.

"Oh hello," said one of the women, "is it all over?"

"Not quite," Bob said. He looked at them curiously. "How come you two stayed in here?"

"We were told it was just as safe as out in the subway and we did feel that somebody should be here to watch the department."

"Well," Bob said, "we're going to have to move some people in here."

"I guess that will be all right," one of the women said, "as long as they're careful of the merchandise."

Bob nodded and left. He went back to his group and asked them to follow him. They struggled to their feet obediently and followed him back to the store. He pushed the door open and went in, the beam of his flashlight again finding the two women clerks. There was something eerie, he thought, about the two of them standing there in the dark through the bombs and afterward. He went well into the center of the store and turned with the light so that the others could see where they were going.

"I do hope you'll be careful of the dresses," one of the women said.

"Now," Bob said, when they were all inside, "sit down any place you can find that's comfortable." He waited until they were on the floor around him. "How is it here, Herbert?"

"Fine," Herbert said after a pause. "A little higher than out there, but not enough to mean anything."

"Okay. Now listen, everybody. I'm going to leave the flashlight with Herbert and I'm going to be back in a few minutes. When I get back we'll have more light and we can do something about making ourselves more comfortable."

Nobody said anything, so he handed the flashlight to Herbert and left. It was dark outside, but the lights from where the others were gathered guided him. He checked in his pockets as he went and found two full packs of matches.

No one paid any attention to him as he threaded his way through the people seated on the floor. He found the tunnel cutting to the west and stepped into it. Within a few steps, the darkness had swallowed him. He walked next to the left wall, letting his hand brush against it as a guide. He couldn't remember how far he wanted to go, so as he came to each door, he stopped and lighted a match. Finally he found it—the side entrance to Gimbel's basement. He pushed the door open and stepped inside.

He stood there for a moment, trying to visualize the basement as it had been the last time he'd been there. He wasn't certain about it, but he finally thought he had a rough idea of the layout. He struck a match and walked ahead to the aisle, then turned left. The match went out and he struck another. He walked past counters of luggage and vitamins, at last coming to the one he thought he remembered. He'd been right. It was a counter of small lanterns, powered by dry-cell batteries. He went around behind the counter, found some batteries and slipped them into the lantern.

With a broad beam of light, it took him only a few minutes to find a counter with denim pants on it. He took two pairs and went back to the other counter. He tied knots in the bottom of both legs of one pair of pants and dumped lanterns and batteries into them until they were full. That was all of the batteries although there were still a few more lanterns left. He put the improvised bag down and went on another search. After a while he found four boxes of candles. He tied the legs on the other pair of pants and dumped the candles in. There was still some space, so he filled them the rest of the way with bottles of vitamins from that counter. Then he slung the two

bundles over his shoulder and went back the way he had come.

He made his way back through the silently waiting people and no one gave him a second look. He walked back to the Saks basement and went in.

"Where are the other wardens?" he asked.

Several men got up and stepped forward.

"We need to clear more space in here," he said. "Get those racks of dresses back to the wall."

"Oh, I don't think you'd better do that," one of the clerks said. "I—I don't think Mr. Murphy will like it."

"Who's Mr. Murphy?" Bob asked.

"He's in charge of this department."

"Where is he?"

"I—we don't know. He was upstairs when the alarm sounded."

"I'll be responsible," Bob said. In the meantime, the other men had already been moving the racks away and soon the whole center of the basement was clear.

"Clear off the top of that display counter," Bob said, pointing to a glass-topped counter where a variety of brassieres were displayed.

While that was being done, Bob got out the boxes of candles. Then he and the others put a row of candles along the counter, making bases for them out of their own melted wax. Once they were all burning, they gave off considerable light.

Bob passed out lanterns and batteries to each of the wardens. "Now," he said, "I want to talk to all of you." He waited until he had the attention of all of them. "The truth of the matter is that we are all going to have to stay down here for a long time. It is something that we all have to face. And we have to do something about making sure that we survive. That's why I brought you here. All of us who are together here can live very nicely in this store basement. We may be able to get blankets and other things for comfort and we may not. In the latter case, we can use the dresses on those racks to improvise beds and coverings."

"Oh no," one of the clerks cried. "You can't do that. Mr. Murphy will be furious. We will lose our jobs and he'll have all of you arrested."

"I'm talking to you two as well as the others," Bob said. He felt angry and knew he had a savage desire to

shock them all out of this state. "At least seven bombs were dropped on New York. We can't go upstairs to look, but we do know that any one of those bombs would completely demolish every building within ten or twelve miles. For several more miles every building would be gutted by fire. You have to face the facts—there probably isn't a single building standing up above. There isn't any Saks store, except what we're in right here. There probably isn't any Mr. Murphy, or if there is he won't be worrying about the store. There aren't any customers up there either."

One of the clerks was staring at him with her mouth open. Her lower lip began to tremble, then she started to cry. "Poor Mr. Murphy," she said. "He was always so proud of this department."

"Well, he can still be proud of it," Bob said. "It may save some lives. In the meantime I want all of you to get busy making this a place we can all live in. For the time being, you can make beds out of the dresses and coats. Put the men on one side and the women on the other. You men who are wardens—I'm making you responsible for seeing that this gets under way at once."

"We will do it," one of them said.

"None of us are dressed very well for the sort of lives we're going to be leading," Bob went on. "You women can look through the shoes in here and see if you can find low-heels. If not we'll get them elsewhere. I'll also try to scare up clothing for all of us. I can't guarantee that the fit will always be good, but we'll see what we can do."

"What are we going to do about food?" somebody asked.

"We'll get food for you. Another thing, sooner or later others may try to move in here and take this place away from us. There are only three entrances. I want each one of those guarded day and night from now on. You—" he pointed to the man who had spoken up for the wardens—"what's your name?"

"George Harris."

"All right, George. You take charge of the guards and see that the doors are always watched. Herbert, you help them get organized in fixing this place up. A couple of you women might help too. You, Nancy. And what's your name?" The last was directed to the blonde who had complained of her feet hurting.

"Connie Lomer."

"See if you can find yourself some shoes and then you help Nancy. Any questions?"

"Yeah." It was a heavy-set, red-faced man. "What if we don't want to stay in here with this bunch?"

"Then you're quite free to go outside."

"Then that's where I'm going. I don't like all these orders." The man walked truculently towards the door. He hesitated a moment when he reached the door, then went on through.

"Anybody else?" Bob asked.

There was a moment of silence, then a tall, slender man stood up. "I think I'd like to leave," he said, "but not for the reasons that man gave."

"All right," Bob said curtly.

"No," the other man said quietly. "I'd like to explain. You see I live right near Pennsylvania Station. I think I'd like to go be with my family."

Bob felt his anger again. "God damn it," he said. "Didn't you hear me say that there probably isn't a building or a living person above ground? And you will die quickly once you've set foot outside. There will be no hope for you."

"I know," the man said. There was little smile on his face. "You see," he said almost apologetically, "I loved my wife and our two children very much. I've been thinking about it since the bombs started falling and I think I prefer to be with them, no matter where they are. But I wanted you to know that it has nothing to do with any of you." He turned and started walking towards the door, slowly but purposefully. Everyone in the basement watched him until he vanished in the darkness beyond the door.

"Oh, why didn't you stop him?" Nancy cried.

"I had no right to," Bob said. He shook himself as though to get the man out of his memory. "All of you know what to do, so get to work. I'll be back soon." He strode to the door and went out without looking back.

Again he threaded his way through the seated figures in the station and turned into the tunnel leading toward the IRT. He kept flashing his light on the store windows, but this time he went on past Gimbels. About halfway along the tunnel, he came to a drugstore. He stopped and tried the door. It was locked.

He thought about it a minute, then raised his foot and kicked at the glass in the door. On the second kick, the



glass shattered. He kicked out a few remaining pieces, then reached inside and unlocked the door.

Suddenly there was another light shining on him.

"Just stand where you are," a voice said.

Bob turned his own light and saw a policeman advancing on him with a drawn gun.

"I saw you before," the cop said, "and I thought you was looting. Now I've caught you in the act."

## Chapter Four

WHEN THE LAST of the bombs had dropped and the lights had gone out Johnny Larson, Rita Barnes and the little pickpocket Eddie Herman were huddled against the outer wall of Gimbels basement with many others. There was a moment of silence as the station went dark. Then suddenly there was an hysterical babble of voices. Johnny felt Rita starting to shake and he put his arm about her.

Then the tiny gleams of flashlights appeared in seven or eight spots and the shouts of the wardens and policemen started over-riding the bedlam. Within a few minutes the crowd had grown quiet and one of the policemen started telling them that they would soon have lights and in the meantime everyone was to stay where he was.

"To hell with them," a man nearby shouted. "We're the ones who are trapped like rats in a trap. Let's rush—"

Johnny Larson slipped his arm free, took three quick steps forward and hit the man. He grabbed him as he fell and lowered him gently to the ground.

"Okay," he yelled to the cop. "The guy has changed his mind."

Several people laughed nervously as Johnny went back to Rita and Eddie. The cop went on with his instructions and there were no more disturbances.

Soon there were a couple of kerosene lanterns lighted and hung up. One of the wardens had discovered them in a soft drink stand. A little later someone came up with three more. There was enough light to give a certain security to the people and they all seemed to settle back in apathy. The cops and the wardens kept moving back and forth among them, but everything was quiet.

The group around Johnny had immediately crowded close to the light when one of the lanterns had been hung at their end of the station. Johnny, Rita and Eddie did not join them, but stayed where they were against the wall. Rita and Eddie had started forward, but stopped when they realized that Johnny was staying where he was.

"It's better here," he said to them. "We got room to move around if anything happens."

"Gee," Eddie said, "look at all them yokels bunched together like that. What I couldn't do with them."

"Just remember you got no place to spend it," Johnny said. He saw the questioning look on Rita's face and laughed. "Eddie's a pickpocket, honey. Right now he's a frustrated one."

"You're kidding me," she said.

"No he ain't," Eddie said. He sounded aggrieved. "I'm one of the best. I ain't never done a rap for it, that's how good I am. You want to see me work?"

"Relax," Johnny said. "No demonstrations here. But take a good look at him, honey. It may be your only chance to meet a pickpocket socially. What do you do?"

"I'm a singer," she said. "Clubs."

"And I work on the waterfront," Johnny said. He laughed. "The three of us have great professions for this joint."

"Do you suppose they'll let us leave soon?" Rita asked. "There haven't been any bombs for some time now."

"Are you kidding?" Johnny asked, looking at her. He didn't know anything about radiation or bombs, but he had read several times that one bomb would destroy New York City and he'd heard seven or eight fall. From the beginning he'd accepted the idea that the city was probably gone.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Leave for where?" Johnny asked. "I don't know, but I got an idea there ain't anything to go to. I don't think there's anything upstairs but a bunch of bricks lying in the street. And probably even the air would kill us like that." He snapped his fingers.

She was staring at him, her eyes wide with fear. "No," she said.

"Hey," Eddie Herman said, plucking at Johnny's sleeve. "You ain't kidding us? You mean we can't ever go back home?"

"I don't think we got any homes," Johnny said. "I don't know about us ever leaving here. Maybe we can and maybe we can't. I guess they'll let us know when they get around to it."

He saw Rita's shoulders start to shake and knew she was going to cry. He quickly put his arm around and held her while she sobbed against his shoulder.

"I'm frightened," she said finally.

"Sure," he said. "Everybody is. Look at all those people there. Why do you think there just sitting there like lumps? Because they're too scared to move."

"But you're not," she said.

"Sure I am," he said truthfully. "So is Eddie. Look at him."

"But you don't show it."

"You mean because I don't shake, or because I just don't sit down like them characters? What's the use? You don't have to stop living just because you're scared."

"Maybe it's because you don't have anybody up there," she said.

"Sure I have," he said softly. "A girl. We've been thinking about getting married for four or five years. The only reason we didn't yet was because she's got a different religion and she was married once before. I kept putting it off because I knew my folks would feel bad if I was married out of the church. Now I'm thinking that maybe it would've been better if we had got married right away and to hell with everybody."

"I'm sorry," Rita said.

"Maybe she was up in one of those buildings and never knew what hit her," Johnny said. "And maybe she made it down to a subway station. I hope she did, but I'll probably never find out. There are a lot of subway stations."

"Hey, Johnny," Eddie said hoarsely. "What are we going to do if we just have to stay down here, huh?"

"Just stay here," Johnny said with a shrug, "and try to go on living as long as we can. That's the only thing there is to do whether we're down here or up there somewhere."

"I'm hungry," Rita said.

"You and Eddie stay here and I'll see what I can do," Johnny said. He walked away and was soon lost in the crowd.

Fifteen or twenty minutes later he was back. He was carrying three hot dogs and three containers of orange juice. "The dogs are cold," he said, "but it's still food." He handed a hot dog and a container of juice to Rita and to Eddie.

"Where'd you get them?" Rita asked.

"At the stand over there," he said, pointing across the station to an empty food stand.

"You mean they're still open?"

"They're open," he said. "There just ain't nobody there. I went in and helped myself. They ain't going to need the money anyway."

"Maybe we should go over and get more for later," Rita suggested.

"No," Johnny said. "Maybe somebody else will want some. No point in trying to grab all of it."

"But what will we do?" she asked. There was a touch of panic in her voice again. "What will we eat here?"

"There's probably other food," he said. "Who wants to eat hot dogs all the time? We'll make out all right once this joint gets organized."

Sitting against the wall the three of them finished their hot dogs and orange juice. Then Rita went to sleep with her head on Johnny's shoulder. Eddie hunched down against the wall and stared dumbly at the floor.

Johnny watched the station. He knew the people sitting around were just feeling numb—he felt a little that way himself—but he knew that it wouldn't last forever. He didn't know what would happen when it changed, but he had a feeling that it might get a little rough.

Sitting there, he saw the group come up out of the subway. Curious, he watched them go over against the wall and then one of them go off with a flashlight. Later, he saw the man come back and lead the whole group off in the direction he'd taken first by himself.

He was still watching when the man came back and vanished in the tunnel that led to the IRT. Then he saw him returning with two heavy bundles over his shoulder. Since he was the only person who seemed to be moving with any purpose, Johnny Larson continued to keep watching the other end of the station.

A little later he saw the man come back again and enter the same passageway. A moment later, one of the cops slipped after him.

Johnny gently removed his arm from around Rita, putting her head against the wall without awaking her. He got to his feet and followed the policeman. Once he was in the passage it was completely dark, but several yards ahead he could see the bobbing light carried by the first man. He could occasionally see the cop silhouetted against the light, so that it was easy for him to stay far enough behind not to be noticed.

It wasn't long before the man stopped in front of a store. Johnny couldn't see what kind of a store it was, but he saw the man try the door. Sensing that the cop would stop, Johnny pressed up against the wall and waited.

He didn't have long to wait. In the narrow circle of light, he saw the man kick the glass part of the door in and reach through to unlock it. Then the cop's light came on as he advanced, pulling his gun from its holster.

Johnny Larson moved forward, quietly but quickly.



## Chapter Five

**B**OB RANDALL WAITED until the cop came up to him and had searched him for a weapon. He still didn't speak until the cop prodded him with his gun and motioned him to turn and go back.

"Wait a minute," he said. "You're not using your head, officer. I'm not looting. What the hell would I do with it if I were?"

"Huh?" the cop said.

"What's up above?" Bob asked. "Not a damn thing but rubble, and that's probably still burning, and enough radio-activity to make all of us vomit our guts out within hours if we tried to go out. It's going to be like that for a long time. So what would I do with my loot? Sell it to the people down here? What the hell good would the money do me? Could I buy my way out of here to some place where there isn't any radiation?"

The cop scratched his head with the hand holding the gun, unconscious of the fact he was no longer pointing it at what he thought was a looter. "I guess it is bad," he said. "We been pretty busy and I guess there ain't been much time to think about it. But what are you breaking into that store for? It's still private property."

"No it isn't," Bob said. "Private property in New York City vanished a couple of hours ago. Oh it'll be back. But right now there isn't any New York and there isn't any private property. There isn't even any police force. You're just another man—but with a gun."

"What do you mean?"

"There are something like three thousand of us over by the tracks. More may be arriving at any time. There are still more west of here. And we're all in the same boat. We're going to be here for some time. How long none of us know. And we all have to have food and water and lights and clothing—and medicine. Where are we going to get them?"

"Well . . ." the cop said.

"There are two choices. We can confiscate everything

we need in the name of the survivors of New York City and see that they are rationed out so that everybody has a chance. Or we can wait until the three thousand people get over being stunned over what has happened to them—and to their wives and husbands, mother and fathers, children and other loved ones who didn't make it down here—and then they can fight and kill each other while they're trying to grab everything in sight."

"You know he's right, copper," a new voice said.

Bob and the policeman both swung their lights around. They saw a stocky young man advancing toward them, his hands in his pockets.

"Who are you?" the policeman asked.

"Johnny Larson's the name. I got curious when I saw the two of you sneak down this way, so I came along to see what was happening. This guy's right. All those people are scared now—maybe the three of us are too—but pretty soon they're going to get over that and they're going to want to eat and drink and if it isn't given to them they're going to go looking for it."

"Maybe," the cop said. In his uncertainty, he wheeled again on Bob Randall. "But you still haven't told me why you were breaking into this drugstore."

"Look," Bob said. "I worked for an advertising agency and I just finished a campaign for the city which was concerned with all the things underground, so I already knew a few things about such sections as this. I knew, for example, that here and Grand Central were the only two spots underground where a large number of people could survive for any particular period of time. Before I got a few things for the group of people I brought with me as well as making a brief survey. I was intending to do the same thing this trip. There are many things in the drugstore that we will all need. Lights, batteries, maybe portable radios, medicine."

"Yeah, I guess that's right," the cop said. As though he'd made up his mind, he put his gun away.

"We'll have to have some kind of conference soon," Bob said, "but since you're here, why don't you go back and get one of the doctors in the group. He can check over the medicine. You might bring back two or three other men to help carry stuff back. In the meantime, the two of us will start checking over stuff."

The cop hesitated.

"Like the guy said we ain't going anywhere with the stuff," Johnny Larson said. He grinned at the cop. "Why don't you take off your badge, Mac, and relax? There ain't any New York City Police Force any more—and I guess that includes my brother."

"You got a brother on the Force?"

"Yeah. Or I had. Ben Larson. The Fourth Precinct. He's in the Inspector's office."

"Ben Larson?" the cop said. "A little, curly-headed guy? Looked something like you?"

Johnny Larson nodded.

"I've seen him," the cop said. "I was down there yesterday." That suddenly seemed to make it all right to him. He nodded. "Okay. I'll be back in a few minutes." He turned and walked away, his flashlight weaving a pattern on the passageway floor.

"Thanks, fellow," Bob Randall said. "I'm not sure he wouldn't have dragged me off in handcuffs if you hadn't come along."

"It's okay. And the name's Johnny."

"Okay, Johnny. I'm Bob Randall." He reached out and shook hands with Johnny. "Let's go in and look around. I guess one of the important things we have to look for is lights of any kind. Flashlights, candles. We'll need plenty of them." He opened the door and they walked inside.

Bob flashed his light around the store. He immediately spotted one flashlight on display on a counter. He walked over and tried it. There were batteries in it, for it went on immediately. He handed it to Johnny.

"This'll make it easier for both of us to search," he said.

They separated and started going around the store. Bob worked his way behind the main counter. He went along, looking in the drawers beneath it. They were mostly filled with various medications. Then he opened a drawer beneath the cash register and found a short-barrelled gun. It looked like a .32. Beside it there was a box of shells. Bob hesitated only a moment, then slipped the gun and the shells in his pocket, acting more by instinct than design. He closed the drawer and went on with the search. Farther on he opened a paneled door and discovered several boxes of candles. He took them out and piled them on the counter.

"Here are some flashlights," Johnny called. "Looks like about two dozen."

"Pile them on the counter," Bob said. "I've found some candles. Now, let's hope that they carry a good supply of batteries."

A moment later they found a drawerful of batteries. While Johnny was piling them on the counter, Bob ranged over the rest of the store. He found a portable radio and a few minutes later found the batteries for it. He slipped them in and turned it on.

A light flashed on the window and there was the sound of voices. A moment later the cop entered the store. There were four men with him. Three of them were policemen.

"You see," the first cop said, sounding relieved. "I told you they'd be here."

"Quiet for a minute," Bob said. "I just found a radio and turned it on."

Static was chattering through the loudspeaker. Bob turned the dial slowly, keeping his head near the loudspeaker and listening carefully. He went through the whole band, but there was nothing except static. He went back over the band once again with the same result.

"Nothing," he said finally, turning it off.

"Christ," said one of the cops. "They must've knocked out the whole country!"

"The bastards," another cop exclaimed angrily. "I hope we got off enough bombers at the last minute to wipe out every single one of them. I just hope I live long enough to find out that's what happened."

"In the first place," Bob said, "I don't think it necessarily means the whole country is wiped out. It may merely mean that we're not close to a transmitter. A mass bombing might destroy most of the large cities, but it would be pretty hard to wipe out the entire country."

"Say, that's right," the first cop said. "Maybe it's just that there is too much static."

Bob looked at the man who wasn't in uniform. "You the doctor?" he asked.

"Yes."

"There are the drugs," Bob said, waving at the end of the store. "If you sort out what you think may be needed, we'll put them in some safe place. We'll round up all the gauze and tape we can find, too."

"Seems pretty silly," the doctor said fussily. "I don't know why we can't just leave it here and draw on it as we need it."

"Jerk," Johnny Larson said.

"People are apt to break in here," Bob said patiently, "and carelessly destroy the things we need while looking for other things. Or there may be others who will break in deliberately looking for drugs."

"I hadn't thought about that," the doctor said. "Sorry." He went behind the counter and disappeared back of the drug section.

"There are going to be things we'll need from a lot of different spots," Bob said to the other men, "and we can't guard so many different places. If we can boil everything down to three or four places it'll make the job easier."

"Yeah, that's right," one of the cops said. He looked curiously at Bob. "Jim, here, says you know a lot about what's down here that we can use."

"Yes. I just finished learning all about underground New York. I'd like to make a few suggestions, if I may."

"Sure," the cop said. "We're always glad to hear suggestions." He put a little extra emphasis on the last word.

"For the immediate period," Bob said, ignoring the implication, "the three thousand people we've got might be easier to handle if they're split up into several smaller groups with one or two men made responsible for each group. It'll also make it easier to handle such jobs as the rationing of food and water. I would suggest that be done as quickly as possible. Then the leader for each group can canvas his people so that we can quickly locate people we'll need."

"Such as?"

"Well, in addition to guards we can trust, we'll need more doctors. A few ministers might help to keep things in line later. We've got to try to find someone who has worked as a repairman or inspector for the city, for the water department if possible, and it would be a big help if we can find someone who knows more about radiation than we do. I've got a man in my group who has a ion chamber and knows a little about it. But he doesn't know enough and his machine is no good for measuring what it's like above ground. The more we know about it the better our chance of survival."

"We were thinking along those lines," one of the cops said, but it was obvious from his tone that it wasn't strictly true. "But I thought you were going to be able

to tell us where to find what we'll need instead of telling us how to handle a crowd."

"I am, but this is part of it. I don't know if we can trust the water that will come out of faucets down here and we have no way of testing it. But there's a water main here under Herald Square. If we can find a way to reach it, we can tap it and get all the pure water we'll need."

"How do you know it's pure?"

"Well, I'm pretty sure it will be. The water comes from either the Ashokan Reservoir or the Rondout Reservoir both of which are a hundred miles north of the city. Since the prevailing winds are from the east, it's a safe bet that those spots are clear of radiation and fallout if no place to the north has been bombed."

One of the cops nodded. "Makes sense," he said. "What else?"

"Food," Bob said. "There are several little sandwich and soft drink stands down here. Then there are three drugstores, two restaurants, and a grocery-delicatessen. There is also direct access to the basement of the Statler-Hilton Hotel. We should make a survey of the food in all those places and work out some rationing plan. All of the food is probably good, but any fresh or frozen food will have to be used first and the canned food later. Aren't there more people in the Eighth Avenue subway and in the Pennsylvania Railroad section?"

"Nothing more than stragglers in the Eighth Avenue," one of the cops said, "but we sent a lot of people down to the Long Island and Pennsy track levels."

"It had better be worked out with them," Bob said. "Rationed properly, there should be enough food to last a while and then I think we can do something else. But again we'll need somebody who knows radiation well."

"Why?"

"There are two more large hotels here. Maybe we can find a way of breaking through walls to reach their lower basements where food is stored. But if we can't, I believe that the radiation will fall enough in the next few days so that picked men could make fast trips above ground and maybe break through. But we'll have to know exactly what we're doing and only an expert can tell us."

"If we can do that within a few days, then we'll be able to leave here before too long."



Bob shook his head. "I don't think so. I believe it may be months before any amount of time can be spent out in the open. And that condition will exist for many miles around us. When I say that we can go above ground, I mean for fifteen or twenty minutes at a time and even that will be dangerous."

"I wish we had more men," one of the cops said.

"You'll have to find them," Bob said. "There should be enough. I notice you are already using a number of air-raid wardens. There are maybe a dozen more in my group. They are more or less trained. And you'll just have to find others who can be given jobs. It'll probably help them to keep them busy. Why did you move people out of the main part of the Long Island terminal?"

"When Pennsylvania Terminal went, there was a lot of dust and burning rubble falling down the stairs and we thought it might be safer to move everyone out."

Bob nodded. "There are a lot of things in there we'll need. Suppose I get my man with his ion chamber and we check on what it's like there."

The cops looked at each other and nodded.

"If we can work there all right," Bob said, "there's something else. There is a bank down there. The bank people must be here and we can get them to let us in. They must have weapons there that can be used. And it might make a good place to store things. We could even use the vaults and a few guards behind the cages could hold off any mob attack."

"Say, that's a hell of a good idea," one of the cops said.

"Two more things," Bob said. "There's a cutlery store down there with a large supply of knives. It might be wise to get those and put them away somewhere. And there's a liquor store there and one over near where we are. I suggest that the liquor be destroyed before too many people get the idea that it might help to get drunk. Now, I'll go get my man."

"Go with him, Jim," one of the cops said. "Send back some more men to help us and then maybe you can start dividing the others off into groups and begin the search for the other people we need."

"Guess I'll go along too," Johnny Larson said. He'd helped himself to one of the flashlights.

Before they left, Bob Randall took a couple of notebooks and a handful of pencils from a shelf back of the counter.

He also picked out a razor, some blades and a can of shaving soap. Then he, the cop, and Johnny walked back down the passageway.

When they reached the Sixth Avenue subway, the cop went immediately to work. Johnny Larson grinned at Bob. "Give a cop a chance to tell people what to do and he's happy," he said. "Well, I guess I'll see you around."

"It'll be hard not to," Bob agreed. He turned to the left and walked up to the Saks basement. He was surprised at the change that had taken place. Most of the counters had been moved out and turned on their sides so they could be used to sit on. Dresses and coats had been used to make crude beds all around the basement. Some people were already lying down, staring vacantly at the ceiling.

"Looks good, doesn't it?" Herbert asked, coming up to meet Bob. "I also found a broom and cleaned up."

"Cleaned up?" Bob asked.

"Yes. I started checking more carefully after you left. You know, we were lucky we could use this place. Something did a pretty good job of blocking the stairway up above, but there was a lot of dust and rubble on the stairs. I found a broom and swept it up."

"What did you do with it?"

"I took it down into the subway and emptied it up the track several yards from here."

"How about the stairway?" Bob asked.

"If you go near the top there's radiation, but not much. I guess the bombs caused pretty strong gales and so practically none came down. I imagine that's what kept the fire away too. Some of the rubble that fell down had burned and charred the handrail for about a foot down, but that's all."

"Good work," Bob said. "I've got something else for you to do, but wait a minute." He'd spotted Nancy and the blonde girl and went over to them. "Will you two girls do something for me?"

"Sure," Nancy said.

The blonde nodded. Both of them, he noticed, seemed to be bearing up better than most of the people he'd observed.

"Take these," he said. He handed a notebook and some pencils to Nancy and the other notebook and the rest of the pencils to the blonde. "What was your name—Connie?"

"Yes," she said.

"All right, Nancy and Connie. Go around and talk to everyone here. I guess you'd better take their names down, but what I really want to know is what everybody does. What their jobs were."

"Why?" Connie asked.

"There's certain kind of work we'll need done and it'll help us find the people who can do it. I'll be back soon." He started back to where Herbert waited, but was stopped by a man who had been sitting on one of the counters. He was a large, well-padded man with the look of an executive about him, although his face was haggard and drawn.

"I wanted to tell you something," he said, keeping his voice so low that Bob had to strain to hear him. "If we're going to have to be together in a situation like this, I think we ought to know a little about each other. So we can weed out the undesirables."

"Yes?" Bob asked coolly.

"That blonde you were talking to. You know anything about her?"

"No."

"She's a call girl."

"So?" Bob asked.

"Didn't you hear what I said? She's a call girl. A whore."

"How do you know?"

"Well—I had a date with her one night. When I was entertaining some business associates. You know how it is."

"No, I don't know how it is," Bob said. He looked at the man. "Who are you suggesting that we throw out—you or her?"

"Now wait a minute," the man said. "I don't have to put up with that kind of talk from you. Do you know who I am?"

"I know who you are," Bob said. "You're a person who doesn't have a business or a job, a home or a family; who may live out the rest of his life down here in the subway and then starve to death or die of radiation. So is she. That's all any of us are."

The man's face turned white and he sank back down on the counter. Bob walked on to where Herbert stood. "Got your ion chamber?" he asked.

Herbert nodded.

Bob turned and faced the room. "I want some volunteers to help carry things."

About thirty men raised their hands. Among them were all the men who had said they were air-raid wardens.

"I'll take four of you wardens," Bob said. "The rest of you can do a better job by staying here. Then, I'll take you—and you—and you—" He pointed out ten of the other men, choosing the ones who looked the strongest. "The fourteen of you stop by the two girls there and give them your names and your professions and then come with me."

He and Herbert waited until the men had filed past Nancy and Connie, then led the way out of the store.

When they reached the drugstore in the passageway, Bob stopped and turned the fourteen men over to the policemen. They had already started filling boxes with the things that would be needed. One of the cops announced that he would go with Bob and Herbert.

They left the store and went on down the passageway. Bob pointed out the entrance to the hotel basement as they went past it. They went down the few steps, past the IRT local turnstiles, down another flight of stairs and past the IRT express turnstiles. A few steps more and they came into the huge Long Island station, their flashlights producing ghostly shadows in the large, empty terminal.

They had taken only a few steps when there was the crack of a gunshot, sounding thunderous in the high-ceilinged room. The bullet hit the wall above their heads and went screaming off to thud against another wall.

## Chapter Six

THE GUNSHOT was so unexpected that for several seconds the three of them just stood there, sorting out the meaning of what they had heard. Then the cop reached out with one hand and shoved the two of them backward.

"Get back," he said. At the same time he dropped to one knee and drew his gun. He sent his light flashing around in a wide circle. There was a brief glimpse of something moving in one of the entrances to the tracks below. The cop snapped a quick shot. The sound was deafening. Then the movement was gone and there was only the yawning black hole leading below.

"Damn," the cop said. "Missed him." He stayed on one knee, swinging his light in a wide arc, but frequently bringing it back to that one spot.

"All right," a voice rang out from some distance away. "Drop your gun. Quick. I'm a police officer."

"So am I. Who are you?"

"Hennessey. Who are you?"

"Jack Martin."

A light winked into being across the terminal at another entrance to the track, then started coming toward them. The cop stood up and started forward, with Bob and Herbert following.

"Was that you who just shot at us?" asked the cop who had identified himself as Jack Martin.

"Hell, no. I heard the shot and that's why I came up. Some bastard flipped and slugged one of the boys and took his gun away from him. He's been hiding out somewhere along the tracks and we've been trying to find him. But we've only got five or six flashlights. He's already killed one person."

"Well," said Martin, "you've got one consolation. He'll run out of bullets sooner or later."

"Sure." By this time they were close enough to see the other policeman. "He shoot at you once?"

"Yeah."

"That makes four he's used then. How's everything on your end?"

"Okay. We've got a guy with a ion chamber. He's going to check through here to see if it's safe."

"Good idea. I'll tell them downstairs what's going on and come back up." He turned and his light went bobbing away.

"Maybe," Herbert said, "you two could wait here and I'll go to check the floor. No point in everyone being exposed if there is any amount of radiation."

"No," Bob said before the cop could answer. "Not with some wild-eyed sharpshooter around. Besides, if there are any danger spots we should recognize them. How is it here?"

"Safe," Herbert said, bending over his small instrument.

They advanced slowly, the lights illuminating a generous expanse of the floor. Every few minutes the cop swung his flashlight around to check behind them, but there were no more surprise attacks.

Directly ahead of them was a broad stairway leading up above. As they neared it, they could see that the concrete steps were covered with dust and rubble, some of it still smoldering. It had spilled all the way down and covered several feet of the floor.

A light was coming across the floor again and they waited. It was the same cop who had been up before.

"How's it look?" he asked, coming up.

"Found one bad spot," Martin said. He swung his flashlight to show the rubble on the stairs.

The four of them started on again, with Herbert slightly in the lead.

"Bad upstairs, huh?" the second cop said.

"Yeah. Probably nothing left and all of us may be stuck down here for months."

The other cop whistled. "Bad as that, huh? Think we can pull through."

"Maybe. This guy—" he indicated Bob with his flashlight—"knows the layout down here pretty well and he thinks it can be done if we get all the food together and ration it. How many you got down below?"

"Somewhere around fifteen hundred, I'd say."

"That means about forty-five hundred. We're splitting our people up into smaller groups. Easier to handle. Then each group leader is responsible for his people. If we can



operate down here, we'll take over the bank, store everything there, and then ration it out."

"Smart," the second cop said.

It took them almost an hour to cover every part of the huge terminal and they found six more places where burning rubble had fallen through, all of it radioactive. In one place the entire stairway was choked with it and it had poured out onto the floor for forty or fifty feet. The radiation was much too high for the ion chamber to measure it. Fortunately there wasn't anything there to burn and the rubble had nearly burned itself out.

"Think you could whip up some men down below," Martin asked the other cop, "and fence off all these spots with benches from the waiting room?"

"I guess so. We could do with some more lights, though."

"We can get them for you," Bob said. He gestured with his light toward the large drugstore not far from them.

The four of them walked over. The drugstore was locked, but one of the cops broke the glass with the butt of his gun and they went in. They soon found the supply of flashlights and sent the second cop off with them.

"We'd better hurry up and get this stuff listed and get out what we're going to need before the sight of broken glass gives somebody an idea," Martin said.

"Yes," Bob said. "That fellow who shot at us is just a small idea of what to expect when these people really face what's happened to them."

"I guess you're right," the cop said gloomily. "Let's go."

They went back to the drugstore in the passageway. By the time they got there, the other cop had returned from Sixth Avenue. He had forty or fifty more men with him and among them was an officer of the bank. He was still protesting against opening the bank for them, but it was doing him no good.

The cop had made another strike. He'd broken into a subway storage room and found it half full of lanterns, as well as a drum of kerosene for them. He'd brought along a dozen of them.

With the men carrying the boxes loaded with things from the drugstore, they all trooped back to the main terminal room. One of the cops took the doctor on to the next drugstore to start going through the medicines there. The rest of them went into the bank. They lighted a number of lanterns and hung them up. They found places

for three or four more to hang outside at various spots so that those within the bank could see anyone coming.

"What about the vault?" Bob asked the bank executive. "Can you open it or is the time lock set?"

The man hesitated a minute. "The time lock isn't on," he admitted. "I thought we'd be opening again as soon as the All Clear sounded, so it wasn't set."

"Open it," Bob said.

"Really—" the man began.

"Open it," the cop said.

The man went over and fiddled with the dial and presently the huge door swung open.

"You'd better," Bob said to the cop, "get all the paper money out of there and burn it."

"You can't do that," the bank man protested. There was a pained expression on his face. "Why it's—it's practically communism."

"Nonsense," Bob said. "You've certainly got records of what money you have. If we ever get out of here and if there are still any people and any banks around, the government will issue new bills to replace it. You'll have plenty of witnesses."

"Take it out and burn it," the cop ordered.

Within a few minutes, the men were carrying out great piles of money and dumping them in one corner of the bank. Somebody tossed a match to the first pile and the bills started burning merrily. The bank official stood by, wringing his hands helplessly.

"There are a lot of bags of silver in there," one man reported. "What do we do with them?"

The cop scratched his head, then had an inspiration without having to turn to Bob. "Stack them along the top of the counter," he said. "If anybody should get hold of guns, like that other crazy bastard, they'll be better than sandbags."

While this was being done, one of the cops went back for more lanterns and more men. One of the wardens was dispatched to the Long Island track level to see if they were going to supply some help.

Within half an hour they had six or seven hundred men gathered in front of the bank ready to work. They were divided into work teams of ten men each and one man was put in charge. Bob Randall sat inside the bank and charted where each team was to go. He wasn't always

sure of the exact location of each place, but he was able to send them to the approximate place and to tell them what to look for.

Before long, the food and other supplies began coming in. At Bob's suggestion weapons and medicine were put in the vault and then they began to pile food in there.

Two hours later the bank was almost completely filled with supplies of one sort or another. Every available inch, except for where the guards would be, was taken up and and they finally had to spill over to the store next door.

"Well," Bob said finally, "that's one step. I think I'd better get back to my group. We've still got to search out the people we need and set up some sort of system for use of the available toilets, things like that. And I imagine that everybody will be getting hungry pretty soon. You'd better get ready to hand out food here. We can bring the groups here one at a time and each person can carry off his own ration. I'd suggest tonight that you stick to food that doesn't have to be cooked, since I'm not sure yet what we can do about cooking or the perishable food."

"Just a minute," the cop said. "Where's your group. Up in the Saks store?"

Bob nodded.

"How many in your group?"

"I guess about three hundred," Bob said. "A couple of the girls were starting to count noses when I left."

"We'll take a hundred away from you," the cop said. "We're dividing into fifteen groups, so there'll be about two hundred in each one."

"It'll give us a little more room," Bob said.

"We're numbering all the groups, so yours is fifteen. That way we can count off."

"Good idea," Bob said.

"Another thing—what did you say your name was?"

"Bob Randall."

"Okay. Since it was your idea I guess you know what we want from you. Sometime tonight or tomorrow, we'll have a meeting with all the leaders of groups. You fifteen guys, the air-raid wardens and the cops will make all the decisions. Okay?"

"Sounds good to me," Bob said. "Although maybe my group ought to pick a leader. I just happened to be leading them because I knew something about the subway tunnels."

"You'll do for the time," the cop said. "If any guy gets out of line he'll be removed quick enough. You can be sure of that."

Bob nodded. "I want a couple of things for my group. Two or three of those lanterns. Then there's a lot of clothing in the Gimbels basement. I don't know if there's enough for everyone. But the women ought to have slacks if possible and those with high heels should have low heels. Some of the men should have things like work pants. I want to pick up the lanterns and send a group to get some clothing."

"Okay. But don't take more than you need."

"When do you want to transfer the hundred people?"

"Might as well do it when you get there," the cop said. "They were forming the groups when I left but I told them—" he fished a paper from his pocket and glanced at it "—to only put a hundred in number ten. So find out where ten is and turn your hundred over to them."

Bob nodded and he and Herbert started for the door.

"As soon as we can get ready we'll start passing out food," the cop called after him. "The groups will start coming here when we send the word. Until we can settle the water question, we'll give out bottles of soda, orange juice, stuff like that. I think there's enough for tonight."

Bob and Herbert went on out and walked back toward Sixth Avenue. For the first time, Bob realized that he was tired. But he knew there was still a lot to be done.

When they reached Sixth Avenue, they stopped to find out where group ten was located. There were more lanterns hung now and the people were spread out in their groups the length of the station. After the group was pointed out to them, Bob asked the policeman about the lanterns. He was led to the shed and given three of them. They were all full of kerosene, so Bob and Herbert took them and went on to the Saks basement.

The room looked pretty much the same as it had when they'd left. Most of the men and women in it were either lying on the improvised beds or sitting on the counters just staring blankly off into space. The men who had helped to carry supplies were not yet back, so Bob decided he'd better wait for them before announcing the change.

He picked out five men and five women and sent them off to Gimbels to get clothing. He gave them a rough idea

of what they should get, in assorted sizes, and left the rest up to them.

Nancy and Connie were over in one corner by themselves. He went over and took the lists they had made. Out of curiosity, he glanced at Connie's first. She had listed herself as a model. He looked over the rest of the names. There was a variety of professions, but nothing that was needed badly at the moment. Most of the people had done some sort of office work, ranging from executives to office boys. There were a few waiters and waitresses, two bartenders and one night-club owner. There were a few actors and actresses, two television directors and one producer. There was one minister. A Methodist. There was a building janitor, several sales ladies from dress shops, a luggage salesman, a magazine editor and a book store clerk. He noticed that Nancy was a secretary and Herbert a bookkeeper.

The small group came back from Gimbels loaded down with clothing and shoes. After several of the others had gone through the stuff, Bob went over. He found a pair of denim pants and a heavy shirt and short jacket that were close to his size. He took them over behind a rack of dresses and changed into them, leaving his suit on the floor. He tucked the gun into the band of his trousers and made sure that the jacket adequately concealed it.

By the time he had changed the other men were all back except for the air-raid wardens.

"All right," he said loudly. "Things are getting pretty well organized. For one thing, everybody has been put into a small group which will make it easier for such things as getting food rations. The groups will be kept to about two hundred persons, so one hundred of you are being transferred to another group. Would you rather volunteer or have me read off every other name until we get the hundred?"

Nobody said anything, so after a minute of silence Bob continued. "I'll read off every other name," he said. "When you hear your name please stand over by the door. When you're all gathered, I'll show you where to go."

He took the lists and started reading. He made a point of being sure that Nancy, Connie and Herbert stayed with him. When he had finally checked off one hundred names,

he stopped. He looked them over and was disappointed to notice that the man who had spoken to him about Connie was also still with him.

Putting away the list, he led the hundred people out of the store and down to where group ten was. He noticed they'd already managed to get blankets and clothing enough to make rough beds on the floor of the station. He turned his hundred over to the group leader, feeling a little strange about the way they meekly submitted to being handed over from one group to another. He went back to the basement.

It was more comfortable in the store with a hundred less people. They all did a little rearranging and the place began to look lived in. Even the two lady clerks were finally resigned to what was happening and had stopped worrying about the probable reaction of Mr. Murphy.

Some time later one of the air-raid wardens came to tell them that the groups had started going for their food rations and that they should watch for their turn. Bob sent one man out to watch and let them know when to leave. He appointed three men to guard the basement while they were gone, promising that he would bring food back for them.

When their time came Bob and his two hundred people marched quietly through the passageway to the main terminal and received their rations. Bob collected for the three men he'd left behind.

"By the way," the cop said, after he'd given Bob the rations, "You got a watch?"

"Yes."

"Night and day are going to seem the same down here, but we're going to keep as regular schedules as we can. Try to get your people to bed at a decent time and get them up early in the morning. We'll use the same method for food in the morning. Check your people yet?"

"Yes, but nothing there that we need badly."

The cop nodded and Bob made room for the next person. When all of his group had been served, he led them back to their basement home. He handed the three men their rations and everyone sat down to eat. Bob had a few frankfurters, a tomato, an apple and a container of milk. The others all had roughly the same thing, although sometimes the meat was a few slices of ham or salami and the containers had some sort of juice.



Nancy, Connie, and Herbert carried their food to where Bob sat and made themselves comfortable.

"It's almost like a picnic," Nancy said. "Without ants."

"I've eaten worse," Connie said.

"With the suit you're wearing?" Nancy asked. "That number doesn't go with cold frankfurters."

"I may not have had them recently," Connie said with a smile, "but then I didn't always eat at the Stork Club. And I'm not sure but what I'd prefer this—if everything else was equal."

Nancy smiled back. "If anyone's going to give me a choice, I'll take a steak."

"Perhaps we'll get some yet," Herbert said. "I believe that there were a number of steaks in the hotel freezers."

"The cops will save them for themselves," Nancy said.

"You sound pretty cynical," Bob observed. "Where did you work?"

"Secretary for a television producer."

"I noticed we have a producer on our list . . ."

"Not mine," she said. "They come in all sizes, shapes and kinds and sometimes it seems there are more producers than people in the audience. What were you to learn so much about New York subways? A track walker?"

"Advertising agency," Bob said with a smile. He realized that she was deliberately forcing herself to talk lightly so they could keep away from the one subject that was pressing in on them from every side.

"Account executive?"

He nodded. "More or less junior grade."

"Well, a member of the club," she said. "If there are any decisions to be made you and I can always run them up on the flagpole and see who salutes them."

"I expect," Bob said with a wry smile, "we're going to have to revise the trade slang slightly. Maybe we can fasten it to the ion chamber and see how often it clicks."

"Or send it up to the street to walk to Madison Avenue and back," she said. "If it's still breathing, it's a network vice-president."

"Everybody," Herbert said complainingly to Connie, "in the business always talks like that and half the time I don't know what they're saying."

Connie laughed. "I wouldn't worry. I doubt if they know what they're saying either."

"You're so right," Nancy said. She looked at Bob again. "What kind of an advertising man are you?"

"An ex-advertising man now," he said with a gentle smile. "I just finished a special campaign for New York City on what goes on down here. If you'd like to know such things as the fact that we New Yorkers use a billion gallons of water a day, send about seven million letters speeding through pneumatic tubes underground each day, that there are twenty-eight miles of telegraph tubes under the streets, or that the telephone company has almost ten million miles of copper wire underground, then I'm your boy."

"I'll keep it in mind," Nancy said gravely. "Was that a lifetime project?"

"Almost. But this morning—now it seems much longer ago—I was assigned to the Alcino cigarette account."

"The cigarette that ~~likes~~ you," quoted Nancy.

"That was the old slogan. I had something else in mind. But now I imagine there won't be much demand for them. Shall we clean up?"

Bob went outside and found a big rubbish basket. He brought it inside and appointed four people to see to it that each day rubbish was put into it.

The next couple of hours went quickly by while odd chores were done in the basement. Bob kept track of the time and shortly thereafter announced that it was time for everyone to go to sleep. He appointed two other men to stand the first guard with him. The three doors were locked on the inside, all but one of the lamps were extinguished and that was turned low. When he saw that everyone was settling down, Bob went over and sat on the floor near the door he was guarding. He leaned back against the wall and felt all the tiredness through his body.

It was the first time since the bombs had been dropped that he'd had any time to think. And it was then that the full realization of the events of the day began to hit him. Except for the first few minutes after the bombs had started he had not thought about his wife and children. Not consciously, at least. Now, sitting there alone, he knew again that they were dead and he'd never see them again. Even his pictures of them were gone for they'd been in his office. He tried to remember exactly how they'd looked that morning when he'd said good-by and

started for the office, and he felt the tears hot in his eyes.

He sensed rather than saw someone slip up and sit beside him.

"Your wife?" a voice asked gently. It was Nancy.

"Yes," he said, hearing the tightness in his own voice.

"I didn't have anyone but my mother," she said, "and she was very ill. All I can think is that she went quickly instead of lingering through four or five years of pain. Why don't you tell me about them? Maybe it'll help in some way."

He was silent for a couple of minutes, not really thinking. "I loved my wife," he said. "She was small and dark and the prettiest woman I ever saw. I loved her the first time I saw her and I loved her more every day that I knew her. I never looked at another woman and never wanted to. She gave me everything I wanted and just the way I wanted it. I hope that I gave her everything she wanted—I tried."

"She sounds like she was quite a woman."

"She was. Every inch of her was all woman. Her name was Alice. Peter was five years old. Both of us wanted him very much and I'll never forget the first time I walked into the hospital and saw him lying in the crook of her arm. I think it was the most beautiful sight I'd ever seen. He was growing into quite a boy. Maria was two years old. Last week. She was a miniature copy of her mother and after she was born I was in love with two women. She would climb on my lap, wind her arms around my neck and look at my wife with the expression of a grown woman. She used to break both of us up."

Nancy reached out and touched him lightly on the shoulder, but said nothing. He leaned back, realizing that he did feel better. Talking about them had brought them back somewhat.

"We used to walk into the kids' room at night when they were asleep and stand with our arms around each other and tell ourselves how lucky we were. And we were lucky, too."

He put his head against the wall and closed his eyes, imagining that he was back in that room. He could even feel his wife next to him as they looked down at the sleeping children. Maria looked so much like his wife that the sight of her gave his heart the same little tug that he'd always gotten when he looked at her. He slept.

## Chapter Seven

WHEN BOB RANDALL had suggested that they all go to bed, Connie Lomer had immediately gone to the bed she'd fixed for herself. She'd taken off her shoes and stretched out on the dresses that composed the bed. She was tired, but somehow not nearly as tired as many a night when she'd gone to bed in her comfortable apartment. She was curious about her own feelings. She knew what had happened and knew that none of them had a very good chance of getting out of the subway alive; yet in some way she felt good. She'd almost enjoyed helping to get the basement in order and she'd been serious about the cold frankfurters.

She saw Nancy Lynn get up and go over to where Bob sat by the door. She watched as they talked, only mildly curious about what they were saying. She saw Nancy put her hand on his shoulder and guessed that it was a gesture of sympathy. A little later she saw Bob lean back and relax and then Nancy slip back to her bed.

Connie liked Nancy. Originally when they were crowded, she and Nancy had intended putting their beds side by side. While she did like Nancy, she was glad that they had more room and that her bed was some distance from that of anyone else.

She saw someone else get up a little later, but didn't pay any attention until the man stopped beside her and squatted down. She looked up and saw the heavy face, the sheepish expression. She didn't know him, yet she did. She'd seen hundreds of him.

"Hi, baby," he said, keeping his voice down. "Remember me?"

"Should I?" she ask coolly.

"One night about six months ago. We were at the Copa. A whole bunch of us. Afterwards we went to a hotel. I never forgot that night. You were great."

"Really?"

"You bet. Look, honey, I know there isn't much privacy here, but maybe we could slip outside somewhere. I'll give

you fifty dollars. I know that's half your regular price, but you won't have so much need for money down here."

"No," she said.

"All right, all right," he said. "I'll give you your full price. You dames are all alike. But at least you're worth it."

"Go away," she said.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean go away," she said. "I don't know you. I don't want to know you. You make my flesh crawl. You make me sick. Go away and don't ever come near me again."

The man stared at her. "Dirty whore," he muttered. But he got up and went back to his bed.

Connie Lomer lay there and tossed on the crumpled dresses. She could feel a tightness inside of her, an old feeling that had been gone a few minutes earlier. She knew it wasn't anger or fear; it was a kind of sickness that more surely represented death than what was on the street above. She fought against it and wished she had the bottle of pills that was always in the drawer next to the bed in her apartment.

Later still not able to sleep, she slipped her shoes on and got up. She tiptoed between the rows of sleepers to the door. Bob Randall was still asleep and the other guards paid no attention to her. She unlocked the door and stepped outside.

To her right there were still two lanterns burning, although they had been turned low, sending a dim glow over the sleeping groups. To her left there was nothing but emptiness. None of the feeble light reached that far and the blackness was like a wall. She turned to the left and walked into it. She walked slowly, not heading anywhere but just wanting to get away from people.

She wasn't sure how far she'd gone when she heard footsteps behind her. She turned to look. Silhouetted against the dim, distant gleam of the two lanterns was the form of a man. It was impossible to see more than vague outlines and she felt the first prick of fear.

"Who's there?" she asked.

"It's me, baby," a man's voice answered. She recognized the voice as belonging to the man who had come to her bed earlier.

"What are you doing here?" she asked.

"That was smart of you, baby," the man said, catching up with her. "I saw you give me the eye when you slipped

out and I followed as quickly as I could without attracting attention."

"You're crazy," Connie said coldly. "I wasn't even aware that you were alive when I walked out. I came here to be alone for a few minutes. Please go away."

"What kind of game is this?" the man demanded angrily. "Why are you being so stuck up suddenly? Afraid somebody will find out what you are? You ought to hope they do. Stuck down here the way we are, you ought to be able to make a fortune."

"I don't want a fortune. I just want to be left alone. Now please, go away."

"Come on, baby," the man said, switching his tactics again. "You must remember me. I spent one night with you and gave you a hundred bucks. We had a big time. You, too. You kept telling me how great I was. Romeo Smathers, you called me."

"Maybe I did before I got the hundred dollars," she said. The contempt was thick in her throat. "But after you left I called you Old Sweat-and-Grunt. Or maybe I called you Shorty. Or Rabbit Smathers. Now get to hell out of here."

"No whore's going to talk to me like that," the man said harshly. He reached out and grabbed for her. His clutching fingers slipped off her shoulder, tearing her blouse. But he grabbed again before she could twist away. This time he got her arm and began to twist it. She fell to her knees, the pain shooting up her arm.

"That's the way I like to see you—on your knees," he said thickly. "Baby, before I'm through with you, you're going to do everything I want you to—and this time you won't even get a dollar. When I'm through with you, you'll think you've been with a dozen men." His other hand reached out for the rest of her blouse.

A light flicked on suddenly, outlining them brightly.

"Let go of her," another voice said.

The man straightened up and turned to face the light, still holding to her wrist. "Who the hell are you?" he demanded.

"I'm from the group. I saw you follow her outside. Now you leave that girl alone and get back to the basement."

Connie had been listening to the voice and now she recognized it. The second man was Herbert Sanders.



"So you can have her?" the man beside her sneered.

"Very well," Herbert said. He stepped closer so that they could see his face in the feedback of the light. He swung his fist and hit the other man high on the cheek. "Let her go."

"Why you little runt," the man said. He let go of Connie and sent a hard right into Herbert's face. Herbert went down, the flashlight rolling across the floor, making weird patterns of light through the station. "Stay there and watch, if you like." He turned back to Connie.

Another light flicked on. The beam searched out Herbert on the floor, then swung up to center on the man beside Connie.

"Oh it's you again," Bob Randall said.

"What the hell is this?" the man demanded. "Grand Central Station?"

"No, it's Penn Station," Bob said drily. "But even here it's against the law to molest women. Get going."

"What's the matter with you?" the man asked. "I told you about this broad. Weren't you listening? She's nothing but—"

Bob stepped in fast and hit the man in the mouth as hard as he could. The man staggered back a couple of steps, then suddenly sat down on the floor. He put his hand to his mouth and when he took it away there was blood on his chin. He stumbled to his feet, bringing out a handkerchief and dabbing at his mouth.

"Are you nuts?" he asked thickly. "Attacking a decent man because of a—" He broke off quickly as Bob stepped forward. "Don't hit me again."

"Then keep your mouth shut," Bob said. "What's your name?"

"George Smathers," he mumbled. "I'm—"

"I know," Bob interrupted. "You're a big shot. You'd better learn something, Smathers, and you'd better learn it quickly. There aren't any big shots down here. There isn't anything but men and women trying to live and let live. You learn that and maybe you'll get along. If you don't learn it, you might as well go upstairs and take a stroll down Sixth Avenue. Now get back to your bed and stay there."

Still holding the handkerchief to his mouth, the man lurched off in the direction of Saks. Bob Randall watched him go, then turned back to Connie Lomer.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I went to sleep while I was guarding the door or this would never have happened. I'm very sorry that you were subjected to this."

"I'm sorry too," Herbert said. He'd gotten up, recovered his flashlight and joined them. "I saw the man follow her outside and came after them. But I guess I messed it up because he knocked me down."

"You did nothing of the kind," Connie said indignantly. "I thought you were very brave. He was at least twice your size."

"But it's not supposed to work out that way," Herbert said plaintively. "You know, that's the first time I ever hit a man in my life."

"You did fine," Bob said. "Only the next time you're going to hit a man, hit him with your fist instead of your face."

"But I did hit him with—" Herbert broke off with a nervous laugh. "I didn't realize you were joking. But I am sorry that I didn't do better, Miss Lomer."

"You were wonderful," Connie said warmly.

"Come on, let's go back," Bob Randall said. "And you, young lady, the next time you want to take a walk be sure you take a man with you. You're not even to go to the ladies' room without someone to escort you to the door and then bring you back. This incident tonight may seem unusual, but I imagine it may not be before too long."

"I'm sorry," Connie said. "I didn't realize that there might be anything wrong with taking a little walk. I couldn't sleep. About what he said—"

"He didn't say anything," Bob said quickly. "And you remember what I said. Down here there's nothing but men and women. If we can all remember that maybe we'll have a chance to continue to be men and women."

"All right," she said.

They reached the basement door. "And you," Bob said to Herbert, "the next time somebody goes out, don't try to be such a damned hero. Get one of the guards even if you know you can beat up the guy."

"I'm sorry," Herbert said.

"You've got a black eye," Connie exclaimed, as she got her first glimpse of Herbert in the light. "Maybe I can get some water and bathe it."

"It's all right," Herbert said. He sounded almost happy.

"I think we can just leave it alone. It's the first black eye I ever had."

"Wear it in good health," Bob said as he held the door open for them.

## Chapter Eight

JOHNNY LARSON'S GROUP was number one. He had hastily organized the nucleus of his own group as soon as he learned it was going to be done, so they were the first ones to go through the passageway for their food rations. They trooped back to the Sixth Avenue platform with Johnny at the head, accompanied by Eddie Herman and Rita Barnes.

As soon as he'd organized his people, Johnny had moved them over near the Hudson Tube tracks. He'd gotten two of the new lanterns almost as soon as they were found. He'd also wandered off to Gimbels and had come back with enough rope and material to rig up two walls so that his group had a little privacy. He'd tied the ropes to a soft drink stand and then stretched them to two points at the edge of the Hudson Tubes, then spread the material over them. He'd already worked out a way to divide up the space more, so they could have four or five rooms if the others wanted it.

It was to this section that they returned with their food. Johnny, Rita and Eddie sat by themselves with their backs to the Hudson tracks. Johnny and Rita both had frankfurters and Eddie had several slices of roast beef. They'd finished eating and Johnny was finishing his orange juice when he noticed Rita nibbling on a piece of ham.

"Where'd you get that?" he asked. "You had franks."

"The cop gave it to me," she said. She giggled a little. "I talked him into giving me an extra ration in case I got hungry during the night. I've got more. Want some?"

"No. You just talked him into it, huh?"

"Sure," she said. "It was easy. He was a sucker."

"Yeah? What else did you get?"

"That was all. I usually like something to eat in the middle of the night, so I asked him to give me some ham. You know, I usually stay up late and—" She broke off as she became aware of the way he was looking at her. "What's wrong?"

"What do you think the word rationed means?" he asked.

"I don't care," she said defiantly. "I get hungry in the middle of the night."

"Maybe these people do too," he said. "I won't take it away from you this time. But if you ever do anything like that again I'll beat your head in. Just get that straight, honey."

"Why should I?"

"Because I'm telling you. You're in this group and I'm taking care of it."

"Then I'll move to another one," she said, tossing her head.

"No you won't. You're going to stay here and learn something even if I have to beat it into you."

"What do you mean?" she asked. Her expression was a mixture of defiance and fear.

"Look, honey," he said. "Get it through your head. There are four or five thousand of us down here. Up there there's nothing. Everybody's dead up there. There ain't any food or water up there. And there ain't anybody who needs it. But we're alive down here. We need food and water. There ain't too much of it. So we're going to live together—or die together. You talk some stupid cop into giving you more than your share and some time somebody else will have to go without something to eat. Down here everybody's going to be the same, dead or alive. That's what you've got to get through your head."

She stared at him for a minute, then started to cry. He let her cry, until finally the sobs were reduced to sniffles.

"All right, honey," he said. "You're a good kid, but you've always been able to be as selfish as you wanted to be. Maybe it was all right then, but down here it ain't."

"I'm sorry, Johnny," she said.

"Okay," he said. He put his arm around her shoulders, while he fished out his package of cigarettes with his other hand. He looked at the package. There were two cigarettes left. "Want one?" he asked, holding them out.

"Those are all you have?"

"Yeah."

"I won't have one," she said. There was a tone of sacrifice in her voice, but he didn't notice it as he put one of the cigarettes in his mouth and lighted it.

"I'm always saying I'm going to quit," he said. "I guess I will pretty soon."

"There must be a lot of cigarettes in the stores down here," she said. "Why didn't you get some before?"

"There probably are," he said. "Maybe they'll get around to rationing whatever there is after they figure out the food. But they can't last too long. It looks like it'll be a good time to quit. Eh, Eddie?"

There was no answer and he looked around. Eddie was gone. "What happened to him?" he asked Rita.

"He got up and went somewhere a couple of minutes ago," she said. "Do you really think we're going to be down here that long?"

"Yeah. Maybe months."

"Do—do we have food enough for that long?"

"I don't know. I guess maybe nobody knows right now. But we'll find out and do the best we can."

She was silent for a minute. "Johnny," she said finally. "Yeah?"

"I don't want to die."

"I guess nobody does, honey. We'll do our best."

"But I mean I don't want to," she said as though she didn't think he understood. "I don't feel the same way these other people do, about up there, I mean. I didn't have anybody except my mother and I hated her. I used to wish she'd die all the time. Now I guess she has and I don't care. I'm even glad. I had a boy friend, but he bored me. I didn't wish he'd die, but if something had to happen I'm glad it was him instead of me. Sometimes I even hated the whole city and wished something would blow it up. Now I guess something has." She giggled.

"*Something* has," he agreed.

"And I don't care," she said. "Don't you understand? I don't care a damn about anything. But I don't want to die. I want to live and become a famous singer and be rich. I want everything to be a ball. That's what I want and that's the way it's got to be. I don't care about anything else. I don't!"

Her whole body was trembling and he held her tighter, held her until the tremor went away.

"I'm sorry," she said finally. "Don't you feel anything, Johnny?"

"Yeah," he said. He'd been thinking about his girl for several hours and every time he thought of her it hurt.



He'd been feeling as long as he could remember. He'd felt it when he was small and his father had come home, beaten and bloody, from the docks. He'd been on the docks himself the day his father was killed. That had hurt too. This was the same kind of hurt. But to Johnny Larson hurt was a private thing and he'd learned that you picked up and went on, hugging the hurt inside yourself until it went away. "Yeah, I feel things."

Just then Eddie Herman slipped back into their enclosure. He came up to them and tossed a package of cigarettes into Johnny's lap. There were a few cigarettes gone from the package, but it was almost full. Johnny picked it up and looked at it.

"Where'd you get this?" he asked.

"A guy," Eddie said proudly. "He never knew they were gone. Geez, I was going nuts just sitting around here and not working. Then I heard you say you was going to have to quit smoking so I went out and got you some cigarettes. Pretty good, huh, Johnny?"

Rita Barnes threw back her head and laughed.

"Jesus Christ," Johnny said. He automatically crossed himself. "What's the matter with you? Didn't you hear what I told her about the food?"

"Sure, I heard you, Johnny. But this is different. The guy never even missed them."

"Well he will. Go give them back to him."

"Give them back to him?" Eddie asked in a pained voice. "But how can I give them back to him?"

"You don't have to tell him you took them," Johnny said wearily. "Just tell him that they dropped out of his pocket. He'll thank you and you can come back feeling righteous as hell."

"But—"

"Give them back to him," Johnny said.

Eddie took the package of cigarettes, shrugged his shoulders and left.

"You hurt his feelings," Rita said.

"I'll hurt more than his feelings," Johnny said. He looked at her. "The two of you are alike. You'd make a great pair. We don't have enough to handle down here, we've got to have characters who are at everybodys' throats. And it'll probably get worse."

"I said I was sorry."

"All right, all right," he said. "It's okay, honey." He

stood up. "I'm going to take a look around. I'll be back pretty soon. Don't go away."

"Where would I go?" she asked bitterly.

Johnny looked around the enclosure. He'd also gotten enough material from the store so that everybody had something between themselves and the floor. A few people were already asleep. Most of the others were lying down, staring off into space. But four or five were sitting up, looking around. Johnny pushed back the curtain and stepped outside.

The thirteen groups were spread out over the station. None of the others had yet put up anything to give them privacy, but each group had its own lanterns. The effect was a little like seeing a number of camping parties out in the open.

Johnny walked slowly along, heading toward the passageway where he could see a couple of the cops. As he passed one group he heard them laughing and he caught a brief glimpse of a bottle as it was passed from hand to hand. Farther on, he passed another group where several arguments were going on simultaneously. He thought he saw another bottle there.

He continued on to where the two cops stood. As he neared, one of them flashed his light on Johnny's face. "Hi, Johnny," he said. He was the one who had known Johnny's brother.

"Hi," Johnny said. "How are you making it?"

"Okay," the cop said. "I guess so anyway. I don't know how the hell to tell when it's okay and when it isn't down here."

"I know what you mean," Johnny said. "When we going to have that meeting?"

"Probably in the morning."

"I hope so. I don't like it. Everybody's taking this too quietly. When they break out of that, I got a feeling there's going to be hell to pay."

"Yeah," the cop said. "We're expecting it. You can feel it. I've seen it before. But never with anything this big."

"Some of them back there are getting a load on," Johnny said, "and I think I saw a couple of bottles. I thought you were going to get rid of the liquor."

"We never got around to it," the cop said. "We know they got into the liquor. We tried to get the bottles away from them but I guess we must've missed a few."

"They break in?"

"They didn't have to. The guy that runs the liquor store over there let them in with his key. We took the key away from him and a couple of the boys are guarding the liquor store now."

"What about the bottles they still have?"

"They can't have very much. Maybe it'll do them good to get a little load on. We'll keep an eye on them."

"Okay," Johnny said, shrugging. He walked all the way around the station, looking at the other groups, and finally went back to his own. He parted the curtains and went inside. Eddie and Rita were still sitting on the other side. He started toward them.

"Hey, you," a voice said.

He looked around. A big, rangy man was standing up with his hands in his pockets.

"Yeah?" Johnny asked.

"What'd you say your name was?" the man asked.

"Johnny. Johnny Larson."

"And you're going to be the leader of this group?" the man asked. He took his hands from his pockets and walked over to where Johnny stood.

"That's the general idea. You want something?"

"I might. You picked yourself a pretty soft berth, didn't you, Johnny?"

"Maybe," Johnny said. He suddenly felt better. This was something he knew and it didn't bother him the way it did when everyone sat around staring. "What part of it did you have in mind as being soft?"

"Going to boss all of us around and be a little tin hero. Get yourself the best food and the best liquor and your pick of the women. Pretty nice."

"You like it, huh?"

"I think maybe I do. I've been thinking about it. You ain't very big. I think I'll just take over."

"You left out the best part of it," Johnny said. "The part that's the most fun. I also get to do this—" He drove a hard right into the man's stomach. The man bent forward and Johnny straightened him up with a left uppercut. He took a looping left on his cheek, then smashed his right into the man's face. The man went down. He started to get up and Johnny kicked him on the kneecap. He went down again with a groan.

Again the man started to struggle to his feet, but he

wasn't moving fast enough for Johnny. He stepped in and grabbed the man's hair with both hands, heaving up with all his strength. As the man reached his height, Johnny let go, stepped back, then drove his right against the man's jaw. He felt the jar all the way to his shoulder and knew it was a good blow. The man went down again and this time he stayed there.

"Anybody else want to take over?" Johnny asked.

There was no answer. Johnny kicked the man on the floor. "Get over to your bed and stay there. You ain't so big either." He walked on over to Rita and Eddie, rubbing his knuckles.

"Hey, Johnny, that was terrific," Eddie said.

"Why did you have to kick the man?" Rita demanded.

"I didn't get my shoes shined today and I thought it might help," he said. He glanced at his watch. "Time for everybody to go to bed." He went to the two lanterns. He blew one of them out and turned the other one down until there was only a slight gleam of light. He went back and stretched out on the floor. He wanted to smoke a cigarette but he only had one left and he decided to save it until morning.

Rita curled up near him and Eddie lay down on the other side of him. Everything was quiet in the station except for a murmur of voices from a distance. After a while, even that stopped as lights went out all over the station. Then Eddie started snoring softly.

"Johnny," Rita said in a whisper.

"Yeah?" he said.

"You asleep?"

"No." It was a silly question, he thought.

"I can't sleep," she said.

"You should have a clear conscience like Eddie," he said, grinning to himself.

"I'm restless," she said. "Maybe it's partly because so many people are around. I feel like they were all in my bedroom."

"You'll get used to it."

"Is there anybody staying in the store?"

"Gimbels?"

"Yes."

"No," he said. "I guess maybe some of us will move in there once we know what we need in there, but that probably won't be for a few days."

"Johnny," she said, "couldn't we walk over there, just to be alone for a few minutes?"

"I guess so," he said. He reached over and found his flashlight and stood up. He reached down and took her hand, pulling her to her feet. They walked quietly out of the enclosure and made their way to the doors leading into Gimbels basement. They opened the door and went inside.

Johnny flashed his light around the store. "I guess this ought to be alone enough for you," he said.

"Johnny," she said.

Something in her voice made him turn toward her. She reached up and put her arms around his neck.

"Johnny," she said again, "make love to me."

He felt nothing, but he sensed her need and desire. He turned off his light and put his arms around her.

## Chapter Nine

**B**ACK IN SAKS, Bob Randall watched while Connie and Herbert went to their respective beds. Glancing over the room, he saw that Smathers was already lying down, pretending to be asleep, holding his handkerchief against his mouth. Bob went over to the other two guards and warned them about letting anybody out alone, especially the women. He went back, locked the door again and sat down. This time he was careful not to go to sleep.

It was several minutes later when he saw someone get up and walk toward him. It was Herbert. As he drew near, Bob saw that he did have quite a black eye.

"Do you mind if I sit with you for a few minutes?" Herbert asked. He was speaking low so as not to bother anyone else. "I can't seem to get to sleep."

"I don't mind," Bob said.

Herbert squatted down beside him. "I'm sorry about messing up that other business."

"Forget it," Bob said. "We're all going to have to help each other."

"It all seems unreal, doesn't it?" Herbert asked. "Everybody acts as if they were spending the night out and tomorrow they'll go home."

"That won't last," Bob said. "It's just that too much has happened for people to grasp all at once. But it'll hit them pretty soon. I'm not even sure it's hit me yet."

"I don't know," Herbert said. He was silent for a couple of minutes. "You know, I was married. For twenty-seven years. We were married when I was nineteen. Mrs. Sanders was never a well woman, so we never had any children. Sometimes I wished we could have, but I never said anything to her about it. We lived quietly. Never had many friends. I used to come home nights and we would play checkers or Scrabble or watch television. Once a week we went to the movies. That's the way we spent our lives. I used to think that it was a very comfortable way of living and I thought I was happier than most."

"Perhaps you were," Bob said.



"I had the same job for twenty years—the company was in radio before television. We saved money every week so we'd have enough to take care of ourselves when we grew old. Then in one day, today, everything changed. The sirens sounded and I went down into the subway with the rest of you. I had done that before, too. Then the bombs fell and I no longer had a job, a home, a wife or any savings. I began testing spots for radioactivity, marched down through the subway, cleaned up radioactive dust and got shot at. For the first time in my life, I had the courage to follow a man and try to stop him from doing something. For the first time I hit a man and in turn was knocked down—another first. And got my first black eye." There was a little smile on his face as he reached up and touched his eye.

"I guess it was a day of new experiences for all of us," Bob said.

"I'm sorry that Mabel died," Herbert said. "She was a good woman and deserved a better life than she ever had, and a better death. And I'm sorry for all the other people who died. And I'm aware of the danger that we're in and that there's a very good chance that we won't get out alive. Despite all these things, I can't help feeling that I've just been set free in some fashion."

Bob wasn't sure what to say. "I suppose it's understandable," he murmured.

"It's not shock, if that's what you think. I believe I had it at first. I just felt numb for the first few hours. But the last several hours I've been thinking and feeling. I'm sorry that Mabel is dead, but I'm more glad that I'm alive. I feel a sort of secret gladness that I never have to go back to my job and never have to go back to Long Island. I'm even glad my savings are gone. But I must confess that I do feel guilty, as though I've done something terrible to Mabel by feeling free. Do you think I have?"

"N-no," Bob said slowly. "I don't have any of those feelings myself, but I think I can understand them in someone else. It's possible that you have missed something in life. Actually, as you've just told it, I'm sure that you did miss many things that help to make life full. Maybe it's just that you've always lived more as an observer and now you're being forced to be a participant. That may be why you feel free and it wouldn't have anything to do with your wife." He wasn't sure that what

he was saying was right, but he felt some need to try to make Herbert feel better.

"I think maybe that is it," Herbert said with enthusiasm. "It's as if I'd been living all my life in one column and now I've moved over to another column. Maybe it all comes down to double entry bookkeeping. That would be funny, wouldn't it? You know, I hate bookkeeping even though I've never done anything else. I used to dream about deliberately keeping the books from balancing."

"I think we've all had dreams like that," Bob said, feeling on firmer ground. "I've often dreamed of writing an ad attacking advertising and substituting it for an ad that was supposed to run in a magazine."

"You know something else," Herbert said. "Tonight when I followed that man out of here, I heard part of his conversation with Miss Lomer. From things he said then and tried to say to you later, I gather that she might have at one time been a—a lady of easy virtue, I believe they're called. Even yesterday, I think I would have been shocked and would have considered her an immoral woman. Today I don't think her any worse than anyone else, including Mabel. And Mabel did not care much for the pleasures of the flesh."

"Then I think you've already learned something, Herbert. I'm not sure we can ever judge other people for what they do. And down here, certainly, there are no people with pasts. Our pasts—and maybe our futures too—went up in those bombs that were dropped. I have a feeling we all have to learn that if we're to have a chance to survive."

"You don't think I'm doing something terrible, being unfair to Mabel's memory?"

"No I don't," Bob said and suddenly he felt that this was true. "I think you're doing something that I can't yet do, but is essential to the survival of mankind. Your past is gone and instead of mourning over it the rest of your life I think you're trying to go on living. No, Herbert, I don't think you're wrong. Maybe the best way to be true to the memory of the past is to move confidently into the future."

"Thank you," Herbert said. "I believe I feel better now that I've talked to you about it. Perhaps I'll be able to sleep after all." He stood up and went back to his bed.

Bob continued to sit by the door, musing about people.

A few hours earlier he would have said that Herbert would be the last one to come through what had been happening. Yet it began to look as if he were doing the best. It was true that it didn't sound as if he'd been very happy and that might help, but Bob was sure there were plenty of others who hadn't been happy either and they would be so busy rewriting the past they wouldn't have time for anything else.

At two o'clock in the morning, Bob awakened three men to replace him and the other two who had been guarding the doors. Telling them to awaken him at six, he went over and stretched out on the floor. He was asleep almost immediately.

He awakened with a start. At first he wasn't certain what had brought him awake, but then he recognized the sound he was hearing. Someone was weeping with great convulsive sobs. A minute later he realized it wasn't just someone; several people in the room were crying.

Well, he thought, the dams are beginning to break.

He saw someone get up and walk over to the door. It was a woman. She started talking to the guard and it looked as if they were arguing. Bob got up and went over.

"What's the trouble?" he asked.

"This woman says she has to go home," the guard said. "I've been trying to tell her, but she won't listen." The guard looked as if he weren't far from breaking up himself.

The woman turned to look at Bob. Her face was streaked with tears and the agony in her eyes was plain to see. "Oh, I'm glad you're here. This man won't let me out and I've been trying to tell him that I have to go home to my husband. It was very nice of you people to let me rest here for a while, but now I must really go. He will be worried."

Bob took a deep breath. "I'm sorry, but I'm afraid you can't leave. The entire city has been bombed."

"Oh, I know about the bombs," the woman said. "I was in the Fifth Avenue station when they fell. But I'm sure that none of them hit near us—we live in the Village—and my husband will be very worried about me. I usually phone if I'm late."

"There are no telephones," Bob said, trying again. "And I'm afraid that your home is no longer there and neither is your husband."

"But he must be," she said. "He always told me that he'd never leave me." She started to cry again. "You're only trying to frighten me."

"Let me take care of her," another voice said. It was Nancy Lynn who had come up while the woman was talking.

Bob nodded and Nancy put her arm around the woman and started to lead her back into the room. "Come on," she said. "We'll talk about your husband. I'm sure he'll understand."

Somewhere outside a woman screamed, her voice high and piercing.

That was only the beginning. One by one, by twos and threes, most of the people in Bob's group began to break down as delayed feelings hit them. One man slipped around behind the dress racks and tried to hang himself using a dress instead of a rope. Nobody was in very good shape, but a few of the men, especially the air-raid wardens, had enough discipline so that they could be depended on to continue working. And work it was. Every few minutes someone had to be kept from going out, sometimes by physical restraint.

As hard as Bob and the other men worked, Nancy and Connie worked twice as hard. It sometimes seemed to Bob that they were both everywhere at once, talking soothingly to one person or just holding someone else and letting him cry. There were two other women who also helped, but the bulk of the work of holding the group together was being done by the two girls.

Bob also worked hard, but one thing was worrying him. Over in the center of the room there was a small knot of men talking together excitedly. In the center of them was Smathers, the man who had tried to attack Connie. As they talked, their little group grew in size.

Because he was watching them, Bob was not surprised when they stood up and headed for the door where he was standing. There were about twenty of them, with Smathers in the lead. Bob remained in front of the door, watching them steadily as they advanced. They finally halted when they were within ten feet of him.

"We don't like what's going on," Smathers said bluntly.

"Neither do I," Bob said pleasantly. "Do you have any suggestions how we can calm them down better?"

"I wasn't talking about them. I mean we don't like

the way things are being handled. We don't like being pushed around as though we didn't have any rights. We don't like the way you're running things."

"You have any suggestions?" Bob asked.

"Yes," Smathers said. "We intend to take over and get things organized better. If you're sensible, we may let you ride along with us since you seem to know quite a bit about the layout here."

"That's decent of you. And what if I'm not sensible?"

"That'll be too bad," Smathers said, shrugging.

"Well, I'm not sensible," Bob said quietly. "Go back to your places. It'll soon be time for us to go get our breakfast rations. In the meantime, if you want to be useful you can help calm down some of the other people."

"All right, men," Smathers said crisply. "Let's get him." He started forward and the men behind moved with him.

"I wouldn't," Bob said. He reached inside his jacket and pulled the gun from the waist of his trousers. He held it steadily, eyeing the advancing men.

Smathers hesitated uncertainly. The others crowded against him until they too saw the gun. For a minute the men in the group shifted from one foot to another without advancing.

"You're bluffing," Smathers said. "You wouldn't dare use it."

"There's only one way to make sure, Smathers. You're the first target."

The fear was naked in Smathers' eyes. "But—but that would be murder."

"No more than what you were planning," Bob said. "We're not up above in our nice air-conditioned offices. There aren't any offices. There isn't even any New York. As you yourself are making very clear, we will make our own laws down here. But *we* will make them for the benefit of all the survivors, not just a select few as you seem to want. Now get back to your beds and stay there."

"We'll see about this," Smathers blustered, but it was obvious that he would hurl no more than words. Some of the other men were already turning away, the rest soon followed. Smathers, sensing that his support was melting away behind him, finally turned and walked back to his bed with as much dignity as he could muster.

Bob put the gun away and beckoned to the air-raid wardens nearest him. Some of them had watched what

had happened, but others had been so busy they hadn't seen it.

"There's a real trouble area," Bob told them, pointing out Smathers. He quickly told them what had happened earlier that night and what had just taken place. "I don't suppose there's any chance of arming everyone who's doing guard duty, so you'll just have to watch him all the time. And there may be others like him. If it looks as if anything is about to start, step in and stop it fast. I think we can keep it under control if we always hit fast enough."

The men agreed and went back to work. While Bob continued to keep an eye on Smathers, he didn't have too much time to think about the situation. It seemed that they would just get one hysterical group calmed down when another would break out. There were several fist fights between men and one hair-pulling contest between two women that had to be broken up. One man kicked his foot through the glass in a show case and tried to pick up several slivers of glass; a warden knocked him out and he was carried to his bed.

Finally around five o'clock in the morning, the group began to quiet down a little although two-thirds of them were still crying. Bob had an idea that they were easing up only because of exhaustion; he could feel the weariness gripping his own body.

There was a hammering on the door. Looking out, Bob saw a cop outlined by the gleam from his own flashlight. He motioned for Bob to step outside. Telling one of the wardens to take over, Bob unlocked the door and went out.

"How's it going?" the cop asked.

"It's been pretty rough," Bob said, "but it seems to be a little better now."

"It may not last," the cop said gloomily. "We've been having a hell of a night out here. We were going to stay on guard in shifts but since about two o'clock it's taken all of us and even then we haven't done too well."

"Bad, huh?"

"One guy was killed," the cop said. "Stabbed with a pocket knife. Two women were dragged down below to the tracks and raped. We had one fight with about fifty guys in it and for a minute it looked as if everybody would get into it. The rest of the time we spent chasing after people who wanted to run out onto the street or just wanted to run away into the darkness. Four of the air-raid



wardens cracked up too. Christ, I wish I were back at the station—" He broke off as he realized what he was saying and grinned sheepishly. "I feel like I was cracking up myself sometimes."

"I know what you mean," Bob said. He rubbed the back of his neck, trying to loosen the muscles. "I'm not sure I'd take any bets on myself."

There was a sudden shout from farther down the platform. Bob and the cop turned to look. All they could see in the dim glow of the kerosene lights was a knot of struggling men.

"I'd better see what that is," the cop muttered. He started running toward the men. Bob followed. From two others sides he could see other men, three cops among them, converging on the trouble spot. But even before any of them could get near, the struggling men moved quickly away toward Gimbels. The group burst open like a blossoming flower and suddenly one man was ejected from it. Even from a distance they could see the blood on his face and clothes. He hesitated a moment, facing the crowd in partial defiance. Someone threw something and it bounced off his cheek, staggering him. The men shouted and surged forward again. Then the man turned and ran.

The cop yelled, but his voice was drowned out by the clamor the men were setting up. The lone man ran into the Gimbels basement entrance and then they caught a glimpse of him clambering over the debris on the stairway that led to the street. He vanished in the darkness beyond.

One cop, ahead of the others, reached the stairway and stopped. He leaned forward and seemed to be yelling. But then he turned back, shrugging, and made for the crowd of men. The other cops and the air-raid wardens moved in on them too. Bob stopped and watched.

There was a short moment of argument, then they started pushing the men. The crowd resisted for a minute, then two of the cops began using their clubs. A moment later the crowd had broken up and the individuals were straggling back to the various groups scattered over the floor.

When things had once more quieted down, the same cop came back to where Bob waited. He was mopping his brow with his handkerchief.

"God," he said, "did you see that?"

"What was it?"

"That was a guy who got flash burns yesterday when

the bombs went off. Looked like a real bad sunburn. But the doctors said it wasn't dangerous. Then somebody started spreading the story that the rest of them could catch it from him and they just drove him out on the street. Jack almost reached him and yelled for him to come back, but he must've been too scared. He went on out on the street. Poor devil."

"He won't last long there," Bob said.

"I guess not. But maybe he's better off, getting it over with. Who the hell knows what's going to happen down here."

"That's true," Bob said, "but it won't help any for us to keep talking that way."

The cop looked at him. "Yeah, that's right I guess. I'm starting to get jumpy. Every time we think we get them settled down, something flares up like that. We've been giving some of the worst ones sedatives, but there isn't enough to give it to them all."

"Sedatives? That's a good idea."

"Except that we don't have much. We've got the doctors inside Gimbels in one corner. The ones that are the worst get taken in and get a shot. But we can't depend on that. God knows how long this will go on. You got any that need it?"

"If we had plenty," Bob said, "I'd say give it to all of them, but I guess we can get along without it now. I don't know about later."

"Who does?" the cop said. "What I came up to tell you was that we're going to start things moving soon. We'll start with group one and work on through. First, each group will take its turn at the toilets and then go to get breakfast. As each one finishes the next group will move in. Okay?"

"Okay," Bob said. "We'll keep a watch and move right after fourteen."

"After breakfast we'll have a meeting. At the bank, I guess. We've located most of the people we wanted to—" He broke off as someone screamed. Both of them turned to look.

A girl was standing up in the midst of one group. She was a tall, pretty girl with long blonde hair. Her head was thrown back and her mouth was still open from the scream. Suddenly she ripped her blouse off and threw it away. She turned and ran across the floor, leaping up on

the counter of a soft-drink stand. She turned to face the silent groups.

Somehow she had captured the attention of the entire station and was holding it. Even the cops and the air-raid wardens stood where they were, waiting to see what would happen. Part of it, Bob thought as he watched her, was the girl's beauty. She stood poised on the counter like a dancer waiting for the music to begin, her arms half lifted over her head.

Bob felt the tension gripping him until he was almost holding his breath. He knew that everyone else who saw the girl was feeling the same way. Waiting. Waiting to see what was going to happen. No one else moved or made a sound.

Slowly, her arms came down to her skirt and it fell around her feet. She kicked it away. She reached up and unhooked her brassiere and it followed the skirt. Then, with one quick movement, she ripped the wisp of silk from her loins and let it fall.

The light from the kerosene lamps outlined the soft fullness of her naked body and a giant sigh went up from the crowd in the station.

## Chapter Ten

THE FROZEN TABLEAU lasted for a full minute. The girl stood without moving a muscle, her arms away from her body. Her face was turned up and there was an intense, almost rapt, expression on it. Then she lifted her arms above her head, stretching her body to its full, magnificent length.

"I don't want to die," the girl screamed. "I don't want to die when I haven't even lived. Everybody has a right to live. I want to be loved madly—madly—before I die."

She stopped and there wasn't a sound in the station, as if everyone had stopped breathing.

"Aren't there any men here?" the girl asked and her voice was like a whip. "Any *real* men?"

"Oh, Jesus," the cop said and took off on a run for the counter.

As though they had also been released from a spell, the other policemen and the wardens leaped forward at the same time. They were none too soon. All over the floor men were leaping to their feet and heading for the counter.

Four of the policemen reached the girl and pulled her from the counter. They immediately grouped around her. The other cops and the wardens lined themselves up between them and the approaching men. The cops drew their guns.

The line of men wavered and stopped. There were jeers and shouted obscenities from the men, but they kept their distance as the cops hustled the struggling girl toward Gimbels basement. As they took her through the doorway, the other cops and the wardens turned back to the crowd.

"All right," one of the cops shouted. "It's time to get started. Group one, get going."

As Bob headed back toward Saks, he saw Johnny Larson getting his group lined up, one line of men and one of women, outside the cloth walls he had arranged.

Back in the Saks store everything was pretty much as he'd left it. Many of the people were still crying but their movements were quiet. He sent one of the wardens outside

to notify them when they should line up. Then he went over to sit down near where Nancy and Connie were sitting.

"How is it out there?" Nancy asked.

"Bad," he said. He leaned back, feeling the tiredness settle over his whole body. He knew that again he'd been so busy that there'd been no time for his own feelings or thoughts. In a way that was good, but when he did stop all of it flooded back over him. He thought of his wife and children and he could feel the tears just back of his eyelids. But they wouldn't come out. And somewhere inside of him there was very real pain.

"Tired?" Nancy asked.

He nodded. "But it's not just tiredness. I think I would just like the luxury of falling to pieces like these people. But then I realize that we can't even allow them that luxury, if any of us are to survive. And something inside of me seems to keep pushing me to live and make something out of what we have here, even though there doesn't seem to be much point to it."

"There's a point to it," she said. "Maybe the only point life has ever had—which is to keep on going."

"Maybe," he said. He suddenly realized that she'd been working as hard as he had. "But you must be as tired as I am."

"I'm tired, but I think there's something good about it. It comes from really doing something and not just pounding a typewriter or trying to explain to some actor why he's not being used on a show."

Bob looked at her, then at Connie who sat on the other side of her. "I'm just realizing, here practically everyone is falling to pieces. I'm not too far from it myself and I think the only reason I haven't is that there is so much work to do. Maybe you've got a point, too. Maybe it's partly because it's more real work than telling people to smoke a certain brand of cigarettes. But you two girls have been going through as much, if not more, and you're functioning much better. I don't know what we would have done tonight if it hadn't been for you. Why are you the only ones who can do this?"

"I'm sure there are others," Nancy said with a little smile. "I know there are. You and the other men who were helping in here; all the ones that must have been doing the same thing out there. There hasn't been much

time for thinking, and maybe I'm wrong, but I believe I know what's happening to me. I hurt and feel like crying for myself and for everyone else—the ones who have died and the ones who have lost. Maybe we're the only ones left in the country, even in the whole world. We've been told often enough that a hydrogen bomb war might destroy the world. Maybe it has."

"I think there's still a world as long as there's one man and one woman somewhere," Connie said. She was surprised at her own words, not so much that she'd said them but that she'd thought them.

"Maybe that's it," Nancy said. "I hadn't thought of it, but it makes sense. I think there's more to it for me. Ever since I started hearing about atom and hydrogen bombs, I've been frightened. Every time I heard a siren I'd think my heart was going to stop beating. I had nightmares about it happening. Now it has. In some way, the fear has gone. I feel terrible about everything that has happened—all the waste of people, ideas, things. But I'm glad some of us got down here and are alive. It's—I don't know—it's as if we were being given another chance."

"But what if we can't get out of here?" Bob asked.

"Then somewhere else there will be people who do get out; I believe that." She gave an embarrassed laugh. "I feel as if I'd been making a speech. I didn't mean to."

"I'm glad you did," Bob said. "What about you, Connie?"

"I guess I've just been thinking mostly about myself," she answered. "What family I have are out in the Middle West and if anyone escaped they probably did. Besides, I haven't seen them in a long time and don't want to. I can't say that I've been very happy with my life. It's a long time since I've done anything I was proud of or felt that there was anything good about myself. I went to sleep every night with sleeping pills. I think I'm glad that this happened. Not glad that all the people were killed or anything like that, but glad that what has happened to *me* happened."

"I can understand that," Nancy said.

"It's like Nancy said," Connie went on, "about the world. I feel that maybe I've been given another chance. I don't know what kind. Just another chance. Even what happened last night was better than most things that have happened to me. Maybe I feel that the bombs blew away



the past and there's only one thing I can do; start over again. Maybe this time it will be different. Isn't that sort of what you meant about the world, Nancy?"

"That's it exactly."

"I'm sorry about the people who were killed," Connie said, "but that's all. I didn't know most of them. The ones I did know I hated and I'm glad they were killed. Does that make me some kind of monster?"

"I don't think so," Bob said slowly. "I'm sure everyone feels differently, of course, but you two girls have arrived at something which I expect all the rest of us will have to learn. If we can."

"But it's not the same for you," Nancy said. "Connie says she wasn't happy and I certainly wasn't setting the world on fire. Maybe we wanted some excuse to start over again. But you were happily married. You didn't want to start over."

"Perhaps I feel differently about what has happened," Bob said. "Right now it's not easy to think about anything else, but I also know that people have to find out how to go on come what may."

"I'm afraid I overheard some of the things you've been saying," Herbert Sanders said. He'd come up and was standing beside them. "It's a little like the lemmings."

"Lemmings?" Nancy asked. "Aren't those the little animals that commit suicide by swimming into the ocean? You mean you think we're just committing suicide?"

"No," Herbert said. "It's true that is what is said about lemmings, but it's not quite accurate. When they run out of food they start marching off looking for more. But they move so slowly and multiply so fast they have to find a pretty rich section to sustain them. So they keep going until they find one. They cross mountains and swim streams and nothing gets in the way of their urge to survive. So if they do come to an ocean they consider it just another stream and try to swim across it. Thousands die when this happens, but they never give up or try to turn back into the past."

"Okay," Nancy said with a grin. "Just call me a lemming. I've been called worse things."

Just then the air-raid warden came back in to tell Bob it was time for them to start. They began trying to get everyone up and into line. Several refused to move. Finally Bob decided to let them stay and bring them back their

food rations. When the others were lined up, he sent the women off with Nancy and Connie to the ladies' rooms, while he and one of the wardens led the men to the men's rooms. Afterward they marched through the passageway to the bank and drew their breakfast rations.

After breakfast, Bob took a pencil and made a mark on the wall of the store near the door. It marked the one day they'd spent in the subways. He appointed the wardens to guard the group and gave them instructions to try to keep as many of the people as busy as possible. The room could be cleaned up, the beds straightened up and the rubbish emptied somewhere down the track. Then he went off to the meeting at the bank. In the passageway he met Johnny Larson and they walked on together.

"Rugged last night, huh?" Johnny said.

"Pretty bad," Bob agreed. "How'd it go with you?"

"Not too bad," Johnny said, shrugging. "Early I had a guy who wanted to be a big shot and take over. And later I had to knock three or four guys out, then it calmed down a little. It was worse in the other groups. I guess maybe because they got hold of some liquor."

"Where?"

"In the liquor store. The stupid cops never got around to doing anything about it. I don't think they know what to do. One of them told me this morning that if they just break the bottles the liquor will run out over the floor and guys will get down and lap it up. They probably would, too."

"Maybe."

"Did you see the striptease this morning?" Johnny asked.

"Nice looking broad. What do you suppose made her flip like that?"

"Who knows?" Bob said. "I guess we've got an advantage over most of them. We're kept busy and they've just been sitting around thinking."

"Yeah."

They arrived at the bank. Most of the policemen were there and several wardens, some of them from the Long Island train groups. There were also several others there, five men and a woman, that Bob had not noticed before.

"Well," said one of the cops when they were all there, "we finally got through all the lists and we got most of the people we decided we need. We've got four men here who worked for the water department as repairmen and

we've got one guy who was a city engineer. Where's the guy who had all the suggestions?"

"I guess you mean me," Bob said. The cop nodded and he went on. "We have two problems on which we need some expert help. One is water."

"And we'd better get to it quickly," the cop muttered. "We used the last of the juices and milk this morning."

"Did you also locate a physicist?" Bob asked.

"Yeah," the cop said. He sounded apologetic. "All we could find was a lady physicist. That's her there." He indicated an attractive woman of about thirty-five with close-cropped blonde hair.

"I'm sorry, gentlemen," the woman said ironically, "that you couldn't find a man, but you may get used to me."

"I'm sure we will," Bob said with a smile. "What is your name?"

"Ruth Shawn."

"I'm Bob Randall. Now, Dr. Shawn, I don't know anything about radiation, but it seemed to me that it might be unwise to use the water from the regular taps down here. What do you think?"

"There is no way to be certain without checking the water," she said. "Some of the water lines may have been broken by blasts and there might be some contamination. I'm sorry that I don't have any sort of instrument with me. I do have a slide rule which will help work out some of the other problems, but not that one."

"We have a man with an ion chamber," Bob said, "although I understand it doesn't register very high."

"It will be of some help," she said.

"That's good to know. In the meantime, I know that there is a water main beneath Herald Square. I thought we might be able to break into it and tap it in some way. You men who worked for the city would know that."

"Yes," spoke up one man. "I'm Jack Wade. I'm a city engineer. I don't have a blueprint with me, but I know the approximate location of the water main you mention. We should be able to reach it without too much trouble."

"How long would it take?"

The engineer smiled. "That will depend on how accurate my memory is. If I'm right, these men should be able to do it quickly enough." He indicated the four men with him. "They're experts in that line."

All of the men looked worn and drawn, but just dealing

with familiar things seemed to be making them feel better.

"We'd need tools," one of them said uncertainly.

"There's plenty of tools," the cop said. "The subway and the Long Island Rail Road had them. Picks, crowbars, wrenches, almost everything."

"Then we can do it," the man said. "Like he just said, it'll depend on having the right spot, but if we do it won't take too long. We might need some help."

"You'll get it," the cop said.

"You can't just break into a main and let the water run," the engineer said. "You'd flood this whole place. But if you've got the tools, they could probably rig up some sort of a valve so you could control it."

One of the repairmen nodded.

"All right," Bob said. "We'd better get started on that as soon as we've finished here. But our second problem also concerns you. Directly north of here there is a large hotel and there's another one across the street. There are probably large stores of food down in the lower basements of each. We are undoubtedly going to need that food. Now I believe it might be possible for us to go above ground for very short periods within a few days and it might be possible for us to reach the basements from there."

"I wouldn't count on that," Ruth Shawn said. "Some of you might be able to spend a few minutes above ground in five days or so, but it won't be long enough for a project like that. And you would have to dig down through a lot of hot material to get anywhere near the basements."

"Well, the other thought I had," Bob said, "was that if we could locate where the basements would be, we could break through into them from down here."

The engineer and the four men exchanged glances.

"That's a little tougher," one of the men said, "but I guess it could be done if you know where to start."

"I think I can remember," the engineer said slowly. "I've worked on all the blueprints for this area, so I should be able to."

"Will it take long?" Bob asked.

"Depends on how many men we have."

"We ought to be able to get enough," Bob said. "After all, they won't have much else to do."

"They did last night," one of the cops said grimly.

"What about the food, Dr. Shawn?" Bob asked. "Is it apt to be contaminated?"

"It shouldn't be," she said. "The available data up to this point has indicated there would be no significant induced radioactivity in food or drugs far enough away from the center of the explosion to escape destruction."

"What if it is?" one of the cops asked.

"Well, it shouldn't be too high and we can probably salvage it. With what we have here, the safest way will, I imagine, be to wash it down with water—especially if you succeed in tapping the water main. That should give us enough water, shouldn't it?"

"If it isn't damaged," the engineer said, "it ought to give us up to about a billion gallons a day. I don't imagine there will be much used in the rest of the city."

"Those are the two things with top priority," Bob said to the cop. "The quicker they can get under way, the better for all of us."

The cop nodded. Within a few minutes one of the other cops and two of the wardens left with the engineer and the repairmen. They had instructions to get the tools and to recruit every man who was at all capable of working.

"Do you need me any more?" the woman asked.

"I think there are a few things we need to know from you," Bob said. "Of course, I imagine that you should oversee the testing of food and water. Perhaps you can work with my man who has the ion chamber. And any others you may need."

She nodded.

"This same man," Bob continued, "has a little general knowledge of radiation, but that's all it is. Until now, however, I haven't encountered anyone else who even knows as much. If we are going to plan any sort of survival and then escape we need to know a great deal more."

She nodded. "What do you want to know?"

"I'm not even sure what to ask," Bob admitted. "I suppose it might help if we had some idea of what it's like up above ground."

"You mean now?"

"Yes."

"I can't really tell you," she said. "I can assure you that it's like nothing any of us have ever seen—and I've been present at a number of testings. But to tell you exactly I'd have to know the size of each bomb that was dropped, where it landed, wind factors, many other things."

"How can we get that information?" one of the cops asked.

"I don't suppose we can. However, I can make a rough guess as long as you understand it is not accurate. I believe there were seven or eight bombs dropped. We can guess that they were probably somewhere between five and ten megatons each in size. I can't guess where they landed except to say that probably the nearest one to this spot was at least five miles away."

"Why?" Bob asked.

"If it had been nearer I doubt if we could be here and be alive. Except for that one fact, however, the distance won't mean very much to us. You can be sure that the radiation above ground amounts to many, many thousands of roentgens per hour. You may compare this with the fact that a single acute exposure of about six hundred to eight hundred roentgens is considered lethal."

"But it will become less as time goes on, won't it?"

"Oh, yes. If we knew the exact amount of radiation I could work it out on the slide rule. But as an example, if the radiation is three thousand roentgens per hour it would reduce to three hundred roentgens in about seven hours, to thirty roentgens in two days, and to three roentgens per hour in two weeks."

Bob thought about it for a minute. "If six to eight hundred is an acute exposure then we should be able to leave here within a week or two?"

"It doesn't quite work that way," she said. "We can perhaps go above ground for very short periods, but not for long enough to do anything or get away. That will take a much longer period of time."

"How long?" a cop asked.

She hesitated. "Even at the most optimistic guess about the bombs, I would say that we have no chance of getting away from here, or of anyone coming in to search for us, for at least a month or two. Even then it may be dangerous."



## Chapter Eleven

THERE WAS A MOMENT of stunned silence after the physicist had made her statement. Even Bob, who had already discussed with Herbert the fact that it might be many, many months before they could leave the subway, felt the impact of hearing it from an authority. Looking around, he could see the same feeling of dismay on every face.

"But—but we have to get out before then," someone said. "We can't possibly get enough food to feed all these people for that long."

"I'm aware that that is possibly true," she said crisply, "but you asked me a question and I gave you the only possible answer. I can't be exact, of course, without the proper data, but you may consider that an approximate estimate."

There was another long silence. "How long do you think it will be," Bob finally asked, "before we can safely spend as much as an hour or two above ground?"

"Two to four weeks. Maybe longer. It depends on many factors."

"Are we right," Bob asked, "in guessing that everything is probably destroyed in the city?"

"I imagine so. Just the pressure from a single bomb would flatten all buildings anywhere near ground zero. With a seven megaton bomb, the pressure would be ten pounds per square inch at about three and a half miles. It would even be two pounds per square inch at a little more than ten miles. There would be primary fires just from the blast up to fifteen miles and secondary fires up to twenty-five miles from ground zero. And remember I'm talking about only one bomb."

The men were silent again.

"Well, gentlemen," she said, "that is a very rough picture of the possible situation, but you may consider it accurate enough for our purposes. Naturally I will give you any assistance you desire and that I can give. But my

personal opinion is that there is no chance of escape—barring a miracle.”

“A miracle?” somebody muttered.

“There are very few miracles in connection with fissionable material,” she said drily. “May I go now? I’m afraid I’m tired.”

The cop behind the counter nodded and the woman left, limping slightly as she left.

“Two guys tried to rape her last night,” the cop said. “Damn near succeeded before we got to her.” He looked around the room, the hopelessness that was on every face mirrored in his own. “Hell, I don’t know what to say. I guess we wasn’t expecting that.”

“May I say something?” Bob asked.

“Sure.” The cop sounded eager as though hoping someone would come along to erase what had been said in the past few minutes.

“I’m sure she knows what she’s talking about,” Bob said, “but maybe there are other things she doesn’t know about. Maybe no one does or maybe those other things don’t exist, but I think we ought to find out. The first thing to do is reach the food and the water. Once we’ve done that, we can work out about how long it will last us with very strict rationing. If we can stretch it out long enough, maybe we can get out.”

“How?” somebody asked bluntly.

“I don’t want to build up hope when there may be nothing to it,” Bob said, “but there may come a time when we can go along the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks. It comes above ground in the yard, but even there it’s partly shielded and maybe the radiation will drop enough eventually so we can investigate. Then the Pennsylvania tunnel ducks in under the river and comes up in New Jersey?”

“What good will that do us?”

“I don’t know. There are two possibilities. If we can get through the tunnel maybe the radiation over in Jersey will be low enough so that we can get away before there’s any serious damage. Or if part of the country is still alive, maybe we can signal and be picked up over there.”

“If they’re still alive,” somebody muttered.

“It’s better than nothing,” Bob said stubbornly. “We can keep trying with the portable radios and sooner or later we may get a signal. If any of the country is left, they’ll

be watching this spot for a long time so it would be easy to signal them."

"He's right," Johnny Larson said suddenly. "We can't just sit around on our fannies, feeling sorry for ourselves. That'll get us nowhere fast."

"I guess so," the cop said. "What do the rest of you think?"

"Looks like we got nothing to lose," one of the other cops said.

"Maybe the guy's right," someone else said. "I remember taking the train to Chicago and it went through a tunnel under the river. Yeah, maybe we could."

Others spoke up and it became evident that they were grabbing the straw Bob had held up. He had a momentary pang of guilt, knowing that it might be nothing at all. But he also felt it was better for them to have something to work for.

"Then we'll see what we can work out," the cop said. "I guess the first thing is to get as many guys working on the water and food as we can. Anything else?"

"Yeah," said Johnny. "When I started over here, I saw a guy I know in one of the groups. His name is Steve Hacket."

"Hacket?" said one of the cops. "Sounds familiar."

"It ought to," Johnny said. "He's one of the boys. Used to be in the waterfront rackets, then I heard he moved on to drugs. He's a bad one."

"I remember him now," the cop said. "He was Big Joe's right-hand man. Beat a couple of murder raps, too."

"That's him," Johnny said. "Nobody catch his name on the lists?"

"What group's he in?"

"Five."

"Five—that's yours, isn't it?" the cop asked, looking at a tall, sandy-haired man.

"Yes," the man said. "Nobody named Hacket on my list. I'm sure."

"Take another look."

The man pulled the papers from his pocket and looked through them. "No," he said finally. "No Hacket."

"The creep probably gave another name," Johnny said, "so the cops wouldn't get wise to him."

"So what?" somebody asked. "He won't be selling any drugs down here."

"No," Johnny said, "but he's the kind of guy who might try to take over. And after last night, maybe you got a little idea of what it might be like. Besides there's something else."

"What?"

"I remember when Hacket was in the waterfront rackets, there were rumors that they used the Penn station lockers to cache their guns in. Maybe they still do it and maybe he can get his hands on guns."

"We'll check it," the cop said.

"I know what Hacket looks like," another cop said.

"Okay, Pete, you check on him when we leave here."

"You know, there is another thing," Bob said. "Do you have any extra guns?"

"Why?"

"You know what happened last night. It's apt to get worse. The men who are leading the groups ought to be armed. If it does get worse they certainly can't stop a hundred or more men with one pair of fists."

"How the hell can we give out guns?" the cop asked. "The guy is leading a group is just as apt to flip as anyone else. One guy with a gun can raise hell. Look at the guy down on the Long Island tracks."

"What happened to him?"

"We got him, but he did plenty of damage before we did."

"Well, you have to trust somebody," Bob said. "How do you know that one of you cops won't flip? If control is lost in that mob, the handful of you can't stand up against it either."

"Why are you so anxious to have a gun?" the cop asked suspiciously.

"I'm not," Bob said. "I already have a gun, but the others may need them."

"Where'd you get a gun?" the cop asked sharply.

"I found it," Bob said. "Come off it. I'm not going to start running around pretending I'm a character out of *Guns* *Smoke*. And if I hadn't had it this morning, my group would have been taken over by a man who also tried to rape one of the girls last night."

The cop scratched his head. "Jesus! This is the damndest situation. We rounded up some extra guns from the stores we went through, but I don't know. Maybe you've got a point, but we'll have to see."

After that most of the talk was about ways that they could handle the individual cases of hysteria better and the meeting broke up. Bob and Johnny walked back together through the passageway.

"What do you think?" Bob asked.

"I think it's a bitch," Johnny said, "and it's going to get worse. Maybe it was a mistake splitting them up into groups."

"Why? It's made things easier to handle."

"Some things. But it's also set up ready-made little gangs and it will be easier for a guy to take over one of these little gangs than to take over the whole mob."

"I suppose that's so," Bob said. "You think it's a real danger?"

"Figure it out," Johnny grunted. "All this crying and carrying on ain't going to last forever. When they get over being scared, they're all going to start looking around. Some of them have already. And there's bound to be a bunch of guys and broads who'll think the same way they did up above. They'll be looking for an angle, an edge. They'll want all the food for themselves, or all the water, or whatever's around."

"Some pleasant prospect."

"Yeah," Johnny said.

They reached the Sixth Avenue section and parted. Johnny went to the right and Bob turned left toward Saks. Things were no different than when he had left. There was still plenty of hysteria but a number of the people, exhausted from the night, were sleeping. A few had not eaten their breakfasts. But there had been no outbreaks of violence.

The rest of the day passed much in the same fashion. It had been decided that rations would be issued only twice a day so there was no lineup for lunch. Late in the afternoon word was brought that the men had located the water main and that there was plenty of water. Shortly thereafter an air-raid warden arrived to get Herbert Sanders and his ion chamber. Herbert returned an hour later and reported that the water was safe. Shortly thereafter the men from Bob's group who'd been helping to break into the water main began arriving back at Saks.

Later one of the wardens arrived to give the official report on the water. The men had also found considerable piping and the following day would run pipes into the

men's and ladies' rooms and rig up some sort of showers. There would be three rations of water a day and each group could take some back with it in the utensils that were available. In answer to Bob's question the warden told him that the men were starting a night shift on breaking through the walls into the hotel basements.

When it was their turn Bob's group marched down the passageway for their food. This time all but five made the trip and Bob began to hope that it would be an easier night and that Johnny Larson's forebodings had been wrong.

After dinner they cleaned up the store and two men carried the rubbish out. Bob was just about to get them settled down for the night when they began to get restless. It was impossible to say what started it. Two men got into a fight and by the time they were separated, four more were fighting. A woman shoved her fist through the glass in one of the counters and had to be taken to Gimbels to be treated by the doctor. Smathers tried to give one of the wardens a hundred dollars to help get the gun away from Bob. Suddenly there was an upheaval in the center of the room and thirty or forty men milled around in a mass fight. It took more than half an hour to break it up. Several of the wardens were roughed up in the process and Bob came out of it with a bruised cheek.

In an attempt to keep it from spreading Bob put the ones involved in the fight over in one corner of the room and put three wardens to watching them. In the meantime he, Herbert, Nancy and Connie kept moving among the others, stopping to talk to someone when it looked necessary.

It was still early, not yet the time that had been set for lowering the lights, when they heard a shot from outside. There was an answering shot, then a whole fusillade that sounded like a minor war.

Bob moved over to one of the doors and took the gun from the band of his trousers. It was impossible to see down where the others were and the kerosene lights did not penetrate the darkness beyond the doors. Bob switched on his flashlight. It threw enough light so he could at least see anyone three or four feet before they reached the doors.

There was another burst of shots and the clamor of voices could be heard.

"The Russians have landed," a woman screamed back of Bob.



"Lady," somebody said in a tired voice, "nobody can't land around here, not even the Martians."

There were more scattered shots and it seemed that they were farther away than the others. After that there were three or four single shots, widely spaced. Then all was quiet again.

The shooting accomplished one thing; it calmed down the people in the Saks basement. They sat huddled on the floor, watching the doors.

Bob stayed beside the door but no more sounds came from beyond. After half an hour he put away the gun. But he continued to stay by the door. Finally he was about to turn away when he saw a movement outside. He started to reach for the gun again, but the figure came nearer and he could see it was one of the policemen. He opened the door and went out to meet him.

"Pretty smart," the cop said, "of you picking this place. It gives you a little protection so you ain't out in the open like the rest of us."

"What happened?" Bob asked.

"Plenty," the cop said bitterly. "First a cop went crazy. John Atkins. As fine a cop as there ever was. Anyway, he slugged the leader of one group and took over. He led a raid on that liquor store and that was when the fighting started. While that was going on, that guy that was mentioned this morning—Steve Hacket—took over another group."

"I thought he was being checked on," Bob said.

"Yeah, he was, but we never found him. He must have gone into hiding down in the subway. Anyway, he took over another group. And that guy Larson was right. He had guns. I don't know how many but several men in his group were using them. He got in the act, too. For a few minutes it was a three-way fight. Then the two groups got down on the steps leading to the tracks and were fighting from there. They must've had some communication for the next thing they were together fighting us. We finally drove off and they escaped somewhere along the tracks."

"Two whole groups?"

"No. Some of both groups stayed behind. At the last, they shouted out and said they'd take along anybody else who wanted to go with them. About twenty guys from other groups joined them. We fired some shots over their heads to try to stop them but it didn't work. There's prob-

ably about three hundred down there, mostly men but there are a few women, headed by John Atkins and Steve Hacket."

"Any damage?" Bob asked.

"I don't know what we did to them, but they killed fifteen people and wounded about eight more. I hate to admit it but I guess you were right about something else."

"What's that?"

"Arming some of the rest of you," the cop said. "That gang down there on the tracks are going to need food and water, lights and more weapons if they can get them. That'll mean a lot of raids on us. We'll have to keep a twenty-four hour watch. And they've got plenty of guns. So I guess we have to do something about it."

"I think you can trust most of the ones you're apt to give them to," Bob said.

"Maybe. Anyway, if things are under control, come down to the bank."

Bob nodded and the cop left. Bob went back into the store. He told Herbert and the two girls what had happened, but warned them not to tell anyone else. Later, he told one of the wardens who would be in charge when he went to the bank.

He was just about to leave when there was a rapping on the door. Shining the light through the door, he saw that it was Johnny Larson. He opened the door and went out.

"Thought I'd come up and walk to the bank with you," Johnny said.

Bob nodded and they started off together.

"See the fireworks?" Johnny asked.

"I heard it," Bob said. "Then I got a report on it from one of the cops. Pretty bad?"

"Bad enough. I just kept my group out of the line of fire and sat it out. But I guess we were both right."

"How's that?"

"Steve Hacket took over one group and a cop took over another. And they've got plenty of guns. Now it's really going to get tough."

"They're going to hand out some guns."

"They'd better," Johnny said. "Look, I've been thinking. As it is now most of us are sitting ducks for that gang down in the subway. Why don't you and me put our two groups together and move into Gimbels? If the others want to come along, fine."

"Might be a good idea."

"We don't have to argue about who's the leader," Johnny said.

"I wasn't even thinking of that," Bob said. "We could do it together. But why Gimbels?"

"Saks is too small. Besides I think maybe Gimbels is a better spot. There are four entrances but they're all ones that are easily guarded. In there, I think we'd have a chance to fight them off without too many people getting it."

Bob thought about it for a minute. He liked Johnny Larson and had been very impressed by his reactions to everything that had been happening.

"All right," he said. "I think it's a good idea. When should we do it?"

"Tonight. Right after this meeting. The quicker the better. Those guys may pull a raid even tonight."

"Okay. But we'd better tell the others about it."

"Sure."

When they reached the bank almost every one was there. The other group leaders arrived within a few minutes. The same cop was behind the counter who had been there that morning.

"All right," the cop said. "How many of you guys know how to use a gun?"

About two-thirds of the group indicated that they did know.

"We're going to give guns to the ones that know how to use them," he said. "The rest of you will have to depend on clubs for the time being. But we're also going to give guns to several of the air-raid wardens. That should help. We've rounded up some extra guns, mostly here from the bank. We'll have to keep a pretty strong firing force here because they'll try to get to the food. We've also got some tear gas guns but we'll keep them here."

"This would be a bad place to use them, wouldn't it?" Bob asked.

"We'll only use them if we have to. Now we know that you, Randall, have a gun. Does anybody else have one?"

No one had one or at least admitted to having it.

"Randall," the cop said, "we want you to turn your gun in."

Bob hesitated, wondering why the cop was picking on him.

"We'll give you another one," the cop said drily. "In the meantime, we want the one you have."

Bob pulled it out and handed it over. He reached in his pocket and produced the box of shells.

"We want Randall and Larson to head the defense detail, under our orders of course. There will be some extra guns which will be issued to guards when needed and turned in again when those guards finish their duty. It'll be up to you two to oversee that. Okay?"

Bob nodded.

"Sure," Johnny Larson said. "There's something else you ought to know. Randall and I are joining our two groups tonight and moving into Gimbels. I think it might be a good idea if the others moved in there too."

"Why?"

"More protection. There are four entrances but they're easily guarded. One of the entrances is off the passageway and that might be a good place to keep an eye on the people trying to reach us."

"Sounds good," the cop said. "We'll move everyone in there tonight. Anything else?"

"No."

"From now on," the cop said, "we're going to have to use most of the police officers on duty here and guarding the men who will try to reach the new food supplies. Even there we'll need additional help. So much of the defense of people will be up to Randall and Larson. You'll appoint guards for around the clock, but we expect you two guys to be on the alert twenty-four hours a day." The cop grinned at them. "You can sleep when you get out of here. Is everything straight?"

Bob and Johnny both nodded.

"We found five submachine guns in the bank," the cop said. "We're keeping three of them here, but we're giving the other two to Randall and Larson. Come and get them."

Bob and Johnny stepped up to the counter. The cop put the two submachine guns on top of it. "Know how to use these?" he asked.

"Yeah," Johnny Larson said.

"Where'd you learn?" the cop asked. "From Steve Hacket?"

"You grow up on the docks," Johnny said, "and you learn things like that."

"I don't know," Bob said.

"It's simple," the cop said. He quickly showed Bob how the gun operated. "Larson'll brush you up on your way back. Here's ammunition for both of you. Now get to work. I'd swear you in as rookie cops only I ain't sure it would be legal since there ain't no New York City any more. All right, the rest of you guys come up here one at a time."

The submachine guns had straps so they could be slung over the shoulders. Bob hung his over one shoulder and followed Johnny out of the bank as the other men started getting their guns.

## Chapter Twelve

IT TOOK TWO HOURS to get everyone moved into Gimbels and settled down. Bob's group grumbled some at having to move, but they obeyed. Even Smathers obeyed, although he looked at the submachine gun and muttered something about storm troopers.

Bob and Johnny got their combined group bedded down not far from the Sixth Avenue subway entrance. Then they organized their guards for the night, choosing as much as possible from the group leaders and wardens. They chose a total of thirty-two, so there could be two men on guard at each entrance on four hour shifts. They arranged it so that there'd always be one armed man on each shift.

"What are we going to do about spotting them soon enough?" Bob asked.

"I got a couple of ideas," Johnny said. "We can take those tables they piled clothes on and stack them up a few feet in front of each entrance. That'll give the guards a little protection. We ought to be able to put them close enough so we can enter and leave from either side, but it'll make it harder for a bunch of guys to charge in fast."

"Sounds good to me," Bob said. "I'm glad we have the new arrangement. I would never have thought of that."

"So," Johnny said with a shrug, "you thought of a lot of things already that I wouldn't. Let's get to work."

With the guards helping, they dragged tables to the entrances and toppled them over on their sides. While the tops weren't very thick, by putting several tables together they got a barricade that would probably stop some bullets.

"Now I got another idea," Johnny said when they'd finished. "We got to be able to see them if they try to rush us. If we hang lanterns outside all they have to do is shoot them out. So we put a lantern on each side of the door, inside, then put shields on this side of the light. That way the guards will be able to see anyone trying to come through the door, but there won't be a lot of light thrown on the guards."

"Terrific," Bob said.



They collected eight lanterns and set them out. They cut shields from cardboard and put them on the near side of the lanterns. The result was just what Johnny had thought it would be. The entrance was well lighted, but the guards would be in very dim light.

"If we're supposed to oversee these monkeys," Johnny said as they walked away, "maybe we'd better split up shifts. I'll take the first four hours, you can take the second, the third for me and you the fourth, if that's all right with you."

"Any way," Bob said. "And it's probably a good idea to limit ourselves to four hours. It's liable to get a little tense."

"Yeah. Wish I had a cigarette. My last one went this morning."

"I think I have a couple," Bob said. "So much has been happening I've been forgetting to smoke. Yeah, here they are." He held out the pack.

Johnny took one of them, then held a match for Bob to light his. "Tastes good," Johnny said as he lit his own. "Now if I had a bottle of beer, things would seem almost normal."

Bob laughed. He leaned against the wall and drew on his cigarette. "You know," he said, "I don't think anyone has brought up the question of cigarettes at all. There's no reason why they shouldn't be rationed out to us too. Maybe I'll go down and ask them. Then I'll come back and take a nap."

"It wouldn't be bad to have a few smokes," Johnny admitted.

Bob got up and strolled back through the store to the side entrance. He grinned at the guards and went out. He stood in the passageway for a few minutes, listening, before he switched on his flashlight. Then he went on toward the main terminal. As he drew near to the bank he signaled with the flashlight. He knew they'd be edgy and he didn't want to get shot at.

There were five cops and four wardens on duty in the bank.

"Anything wrong?" one of the cops asked as Bob came in.

"No," Bob said. He quickly reported what they had accomplished. "But I came down for another reason.

Nothing's been said about rationing cigarettes. Will we be able to get any?"

"That's all?" the cop said with a grin. "Nobody's bothered to ask about cigarettes so we haven't even thought about rationing them. In fact we haven't even gathered them up—except maybe a pack at a time. There should be plenty in the drugstore. Go help yourself."

"Okay," Bob said with an answering grin. He turned and went back the way he'd come. When he reached the drugstore, he went in and picked out two cartons of cigarettes. He went on back to the store and found Johnny. He handed him one of the cartons.

"What's this, Christmas?" Johnny asked.

"They haven't even gathered the cigarettes together and they said we should help ourselves. I'll turn in, I guess. You'll wake me up?"

"Yeah."

"I'll be over there," Bob said, pointing to the spot where he had fixed his bed. "Take it easy."

"Sure."

As he walked across the store, Bob looked around and marveled at how quiet it was. Here and there someone tossed or moaned in his sleep, but the whole group was fairly silent. The work and then the moving had probably been enough to tire them. And the fact that the worst troublemakers were probably with the gang in the subway helped them to rest easier.

He found his bed and noticed that Nancy had made hers only a couple of feet away. She seemed to be asleep. He stood for a moment looking down at her relaxed face, noticing the tired lines that had not yet smoothed out. He stretched out on his thin bed, leaving the submachine gun around his shoulder. That way if anyone did try to steal it he would be awakened by the attempt.

Slowly the tenseness left his muscles. He closed his eyes and saw his wife and children against the backdrop of his eyelids. Then he fell asleep.

The sound of a gunshot awakened him. He came to his feet in a single motion, feeling the weight of the submachine gun on his shoulder. Even as he was getting to his feet, he spotted the orange flashes of gunfire bursting out of the darkness beyond the Sixth Avenue door. He started running toward it, aware that all over the store people

were awaking and that others were starting to move among them to quiet them down.

Johnny Larson was running up from the back of the store and they both reached the barricade at about the same time. They crouched behind the tables near the guard who was firing back with his pistol. The two machine guns set up their harsh chatter. The barrel lurched in Bob's hands and he could see splinters of wood jump from the edge of the doorway. Someone screamed outside.

"Short bursts does it," Johnny muttered beside him.

Bob nodded and let up on the trigger. Somebody fired from outside and he sent a short burst toward the gunfire. He heard Johnny's gun stutter again.

There was a shout from outside and they heard running feet. They waited tensely, but nothing happened.

"I think they left," Johnny said. He fired another quick burst through the door but there were no answering shots. They waited another fifteen minutes.

"Let's go look," Johnny said.

They both got up and walked, one from each side, to the door. Johnny put his hand around the edge of the door and switched on his flashlight. Nothing happened. They both stepped out and went through the doors. They didn't have to bother opening them. There was no longer any glass. Both carried their flashlights in their left hands and held the submachine guns cradled at ready in their right arms.

As they reached the edge of the platform their lights illumined several bodies on the floor. Johnny swept his flashlight in a wide arc. There were eight bodies.

"What do you suppose that was about?" Johnny muttered. "I figured their first raid would be to try to get food. I was even hanging around the passageway entrance because of that."

Bob had caught a glimpse of something and steadied his flashlight. "There's the answer," he said. The light was centered on a storage room, the door of which was hanging open. "They came after lanterns. They must have started shooting just as a delaying tactic, probably expecting much less return fire than they got."

"Well, we got eight of the bastards," Johnny said with satisfaction.

"What do we do about them?"

"I guess the same thing the cops did with the others. We can't bury them. So we'll have the boys carry them down to the Hudson Tube level. I think they stacked the others in the cars of a train that's standing there. Let's look them over first."

They walked over to look at the bodies. They found four guns and slipped them into their pockets. Then they went back into the store. It was time for a new shift of guards. They awakened the new guards and then had the ones who were finishing go out and carry the bodies away. Johnny Larson went along to guard them with his sub-machine gun.

"Well," he said, coming back and stopping by Bob, "that was good timing. I couldn't have found a better alarm clock to get you up, huh?"

"It certainly got me up," Bob admitted.

"That was pretty good," Johnny said. "You were up and over here as soon as I was. Nice going."

"You know something funny," Bob said. "I was just thinking about that. It's only forty-eight hours ago that I always had trouble waking up in the mornings. I had to have at least two cups of coffee and even then it was usually an hour before I was fully awake."

"This rugged life agrees with you," Johnny said with a grin. He dropped his cigarette on the floor and ground it to shreds beneath his heel. "Looks like everybody is quieting down again. I guess I'll conk out for my four hours."

"Okay," Bob said. He watched Johnny go over and stretch out near a dark-haired girl. He saw him reach over and pat the girl on the head, then curl up.

Bob went over and sat on the floor with his back against the wall where he could watch most of the store. He didn't know how Johnny had worked it but he'd decided that he would make a tour of inspection every half-hour.

He saw someone get up and walk toward him. He soon saw that it was Nancy and relaxed again. She came over and sat on the floor beside him.

"Got a cigarette for a girl?" she asked.

He gave her a cigarette and lit it for her. "You should be sleeping," he said. "You'll need the rest."

"I just wanted a cigarette," she said. "Then I'll go back to sleep." She held the cigarette up and looked at it. "You know this is the first time I've wanted a cigarette since this happened."

"Me too," he said. "Maybe it means that we've decided to try to live."

"A good idea," she said. "What was all the bang-bang about?"

"The gang from the subway was getting some lanterns. We think they started to shoot as a delaying action to cover the theft."

"Anybody hurt?"

"Not in here. We killed eight of them."

She looked at him. "How do you feel about it?"

"I don't know," he confessed. "It was something that had to be done and I guess that's about all. I think maybe it might have been different if I'd seen them being hit and falling. I don't really know."

"Were you in the war?"

"Sure. World War Two and Korea. Only I manned a desk in Washington. I never even saw a gun, let alone handled one."

"You seem to be doing all right," she said.

"There are certain changes," he said drily. "I'm not sure whether I like the way I'm being able to adapt or am horrified by it."

"I expect we're all doing things a little differently. I seem to be doing an impression of Florence Nightingale and I'm sure that just the suggestion would have sent my office into gales of laughter." She drew on her cigarette and gazed out over the store. "I don't know which is worse—the shooting or everybody getting hysterical. I guess the shooting is more restful."

"They are a little calmer tonight," he said. "Maybe it's partly because they were kept busier. And it may have helped that some of the worst influences are gone. Johnny and I were talking about it earlier."

"What's he like?" she asked.

"I don't know. I like him. And we work together well. He knows all sorts of things I don't, which come in handy down here. And I know a few things he doesn't. So it makes a pretty good combination."

"Whose idea was it to get together here?"

"His."

"I think it was a good idea. I think the other way everybody felt shut off from everybody else and this way they get more of a feeling of belonging and of being safer because of it."

"Togetherness?" he asked with a grin.

"Why not?" she asked. "Togetherness was once a good idea before it got taken up by the wrong people. I think togetherness is fine as long as it's balanced by a little individualness, if you know what I mean."

"I guess I do. And you're probably right. We certainly need togetherness here now just for protection."

"What do you think our chances are?" she asked soberly.

"I don't really know," he said. "Maybe we have a chance—if we can get food and if we can keep from killing each other off."

"Well," she said, putting her cigarette out, "I'm going back to bed. Keep your eyes open, General. The natives are restless tonight." She grinned at him and was gone.

He snubbed out his own cigarette and stood up. He walked slowly around the store, stopping to chat a few minutes with the guards at each entrance.

The rest of the night passed peacefully.



## Chapter Thirteen

FOUR MORE DAYS had passed, according to the marks that Bob Randall was now putting on the wall of Gimbels, when the men reported that they had finally broken through the wall of the hotel across the street from Penn Station.

It had been a fairly hectic four days. The group led by the cop and the criminal—now known to all as the Subway Gang—had pulled several more raids. They'd managed to steal some quantity of food. Each time they had finally been driven off, but forty more men had died in the process. Once they had attacked the men working on the wall, killing most of them. After that, one of the cops went along with a submachine gun.

Other things had happened, too. Some good and some bad, but the overall result seemed to be heavily weighted on the good side. The slight boundaries between groups had vanished, so that it was now really one big group. In the beginning, when they moved into Gimbels, each group had picked a section slightly separated from the others. But in the four days they had moved closer and closer together. Nothing had been said about leadership, but to all intents and purposes Bob Randall and Johnny Larson had become the joint leaders of the whole group. The other leaders worked as guards or helped throughout the building wherever it was needed.

Two people had succeeded in committing suicide and several others had been stopped in time. There were ten more rapings, two of them occurring to women who had managed to wander outside the store alone and had been grabbed by men from the Subway Gang.

The fourth night they started carrying the food from the hotel basement to the bank. There was plenty of it and much of the frozen food could still be used, although it would now have to be used quickly. And that night the Subway Gang struck again.

It was a long and vicious fight, with men running from Gimbels to back up the guards and men carrying the food.

The Subway Gang was finally beaten off, but not until they had succeeded in grabbing a considerable amount of food. The death toll was high. Thirty of the defenders were dead and fifty of the Subway Gang when it was finally over.

Half an hour later Bob and Johnny were summoned to a meeting at the bank. When they arrived there was no one else there except the regular defenders of the food supplies. The same cop who usually talked at the meetings—they had since learned that his name was Lew Egen—did the speaking.

"We asked you boys to come here," he said, "because there is something that has to be done. I guess we can't order anyone on this and we'll have to make it a volunteer job. But we've got to do something about that gang in the subway. They're getting food and they must've found some supply of water in the tunnel. We know they've got plenty of guns and ammunition. They can keep up this hitting and running as long as they don't run out of those four things. And every time they hit a few more die. We have no choice. We've got to stop them."

"How?" Johnny asked.

"By going in and getting them."

"It's a good idea," Johnny said drily. "How're you going to do it?"

"That's the problem," Lew Egen said with a grim smile. "Maybe there'd be no problem if they was headed by some cluck who flipped. But Hacket is a smart guy and Atkins used to be a hell of a smart cop. They're going to make it tough any way we play it. And if we go after them, we have to go down a narrow subway tunnel to meet them."

"How far down do you think they are?" Bob asked.

"We don't know. My guess is that they are at the Twenty-third Street station. They'd certainly go far enough so they can use those lanterns they took."

"We march down the tunnel," Johnny said, "and they can take their time and knock us off a layer at a time. No matter how many men we got, the ones in the back won't even be able to shoot since we can't spread out."

"That's right," the cop said. "So we figured instead of an army we'll send five guys carrying the five submachine guns. Without lights. If they're using lights we should

spot them and go the rest of the way on our bellies. That ought to get us close enough."

"Five guys, huh?" Johnny said. "Who'd you have in mind?"

"Three of us. Then we thought of taking you two, if you're interested. But it's not an order."

Bob could feel a twisting of the muscles in his stomach.

"I like that," Johnny said. "Five of us in the dark with these babies ought to do it. Count me in."

"I'll go," Bob said and was surprised to hear his own voice.

"A longshoreman and an advertising man," the cop said, shaking his head. "Maybe I'll get used to it, but I don't know."

Johnny grinned at him. "Times have changed, copper," he said. "When do we go?"

"Right now," Lew Egen said. "Why wait until they get around to pulling another raid?" He got up and opened the big vault. He dug into a box and tossed more ammunition to Johnny and Bob. He closed the vault and picked up his own submachine gun and nodded. Two other cops sauntered over with guns. They were two that Johnny and Bob already knew, Jack Martin and Pete Baker.

"Good luck," one of the other cops said.

The five men walked out and started back toward the passageway, their flashlights making dancing patterns into the dark beyond. They walked past Gimbels and on out to the platform. When they reached the stairs leading down to the subway level, Lew Egen stopped.

"No more lights from here on," he said, switching off his own. The other lights blinked out. "We'll go downstairs and jump down on the express tracks. I'll go first. Pete second, then Larson, Randall, and Jack. Each of you put one hand on the shoulder of the man ahead of you. It'll be so dark we might get separated otherwise. And no talking once we're in the subway."

"Why the express tracks?" Bob asked.

"If I'm right about them being at the Twenty-third Street station we'll have a better view of the station platform from the express tracks. And the steel posts between the express and local tracks will give us a little protection. Okay, let's go."

In single file they went down the stairs into the utter

darkness. The rhythm of the man ahead, transmitted through their arms, helped each man to find the steps. Reaching the bottom, they turned to the left and moved more slowly as Egen felt his way to the edge of the platform. Contact was lost momentarily as each man dropped to the tracks, but was soon regained. They started walking down the track between the rails. There wasn't so much as a glimmer of light anywhere. Occasionally they would blunder into one of the rails and turn back toward the center of the track.

It was impossible to judge either distance or time in that complete blackness, but the going was slow and it must have taken them a long time to cover what was no more than a few blocks. Then suddenly far ahead they caught a faint glimmer of light.

They stopped and stood there for a minute while they all peered ahead. Then they started forward again, moving still slower this time. Bob could feel the pounding of his own heart and wondered if the others were having the same difficulty breathing that he was.

The light was coming from the Twenty-third Street station. When they were finally about a hundred and fifty yards from the station they stopped again. They could make out the people on the platform of the station and could hear them, too. There were two groups, one at either end of the platform. The nearest group, which was also the smallest, seemed to be having a party. There were shouts and occasional laughter and they could see the light glinting on what seemed to be bottles.

They were standing there for several minutes before they finally caught sight of a figure down on the tracks, several yards nearer than the station. He moved and they saw him silhouetted against the lanterns.

"Spread out and drop down," Lew Egen whispered and the command was passed back.

Bob found himself lying on the ground with the rail pressing against his right shoulder and Johnny Larson wedged against his left. He could figure out that he and Johnny and one of the cops were probably in between the rails, with Egen the other side of one rail, and Jack Martin just beyond the other. There was water between the tracks and he could feel it soaking through his clothes.

They lay there for a few more minutes watching the sentry they had spotted. They could see him moving

around. Once they saw the light glint on something in his hand. At first they thought it was a gun but quickly realized it was a bottle.

"There's only one guy," Johnny Larson whispered. "Somebody hold my gun and I'll go get him."

"How?" Egen whispered back.

"Hell," said Johnny, "there's nothing to it. I did it plenty of times in Korea. Take my gun."

There was a moment of silence. "All right," Egen whispered. "But watch it. There's some gravel and he may hear you."

"Not me," whispered Johnny. "I'm taking off my shoes and walking on the third rail."

Bob could feel him wriggling around and then he was gone. A moment later they saw him crouched and moving along the third rail. They would lose sight of him for a minute, then see him again as he was caught against the glow from the station.

The four of them lay there, straining to see, almost holding their breaths and feeling as if they were inching along the narrow rail with Johnny Larson.

Again they lost sight of him and the next time they glimpsed him he was almost on top of the sentry. He was motionless for a moment, then launched himself through the air. His body and the sentry's mingled into one and vanished in the darkness between the rails.

The next few minutes were complete agony for the four men who watched and waited. Then they saw one figure rise up against the light's pale gleam and they stopped breathing as they waited to see what he was going to do. He stood motionless for a second, then turned and swiftly blended with the shadows as he came back toward them.

The four men let out a single audible breath.

A couple of minutes later Johnny Larson stepped off the third rail in front of them. He bent to put on his shoes, then slipped into his place between Bob and the cop.

"I told you there was nothing to it," he whispered.

"What happened?" Egen whispered back.

"I broke his neck," Johnny said. "What else?"

"All right, let's go," Egen said.

They began to crawl forward along the track. They went slightly faster than before, but still going carefully in the event that there was somewhere another sentry.

It took them half an hour to cover the hundred and fifty yards, but finally they reached a spot on the express tracks directly in front of the platform. Egen signaled for them to swing around facing it. They did so, spreading out so that there was one man between each two steel posts. Lying down, they had to lift their heads to see over the third rail; it would afford them considerable protection. Each man slid the barrel of his submachine gun over the top of the third rail, cuddled the stock against his cheek and waited for Egen to give the signal.

Egen's gun stuttered into action and a second later the other four guns took up the staccato song. A dozen men spun and fell with the first burst. A few men in the rear of the groups on the platform leaped for the lights, while another man whirled and began shooting at the lights with his pistol. They were close enough to recognize him as the renegade cop. Others started firing back. They saw another score of men fall on the platform before the lights went out.

"Split up the platform," Egen said. "Each man take what he thinks is one-fifth of the platform, starting with Martin. Then comb your section, top to bottom, with short bursts.

Bob Randall tried to visualize first the one-fifth that would be Martin's, then the next one-fifth. He started swinging the gun in a short arc, pressing the trigger, then raising the muzzle and retracing the arc as he pressed the trigger again. As he dropped the muzzle down, he brought it low enough to cover the track level, too.

The orange flashes from the platform slowly thinned out, then there were no more. The five men continued to fire.

"Stop," a voice yelled at them. "Please stop. We don't want to fight. We just want to surrender."

"Stop firing," Egen ordered. He raised his voice. "Find the lanterns and light them. And no tricks." He lowered his voice. "Jack, turn and keep an eye on your side in case somebody slipped around. Pete, you do the same thing on my side."

A minute or so passed and then there was the tiny yellow flare of a match on the platform. It transferred its flame to a lantern and there was some light. One by one five more lanterns glowed.

"I think the rest are broken," the voice shouted.



There was enough light so that the five men could see all of the platform although dimly. Bodies were stacked all along the station and a small group of people were huddled on the floor at one end.

"All right," Egen shouted, "all of you get up against the wall and stand there with your hands up." As they started to obey, he lowered his voice. "Randall, cut around to the right so that you can cover the platform from there. Larson, you cut around to the left and do the same from there. When you're in position, shout. Then the three of us will go up on the platform while you cover us. Got it?"

"Right," Bob and Johnny said together.

Bob stood up and walked around to the right in a wide arc that brought him up at the edge of the platform on the local tracks.

"Okay here," he shouted.

A moment later Johnny shouted from the other end.

Then the three cops stood up and marched across the tracks to the platform, their guns held at ready. They climbed up on to the station floor and threaded their way through the sprawled bodies to the men and women standing against the wall. Two of them started down the line, searching everyone. The third cop went on past them toward the turnstiles. He passed through and stopped to look in the change booth. Then he went on to look at the stairs that led to the street.

There was a short burst from his gun and a body came tumbling down at his feet. He turned back, his gun smoking, and went across to the men's room. He kicked open the door and sprayed lead inside. Then he entered and looked around. He came out and repeated the action at the ladies' room. He came out and started walking among the bodies. A couple of times he turned a body over to look at the face, using his foot. By the time he'd finished, the other two had completed their search.

"All right," Egen shouted. "You boys can come up now."

Bob walked out on the track and vaulted up on the platform. He stepped around the dead bodies, being careful not to look at them. As he reached the living group, one of the men was talking to Egen.

"—me, officer! Two hours after we went with them most of us were sorry. But there wasn't anything we could do. They threatened us. And they practically starved us to

death. That's why we had to stay down at the other end of the platform. They said we weren't fit to be with but they wouldn't let us leave. You have to believe us."

"I don't have to do anything," Egen snapped. "But stop squawking. You're alive, ain't you? We'll take you back and see how you behave."

"Several of us are wounded," the man said. "A few pretty badly. What about them?"

"They can walk back too," Egen said. "If they can't walk, some of you can carry them. Now shut up." He turned to the third cop. "What'd you find, Pete?"

"One guy was up on the stairs and two guys in the ladies' room," Pete said. "I got them."

"What about Hacket and Atkins?"

"They're over there," Pete said, using his gun to motion toward the dead.

"You're sure?"

"Yeah."

"Okay. Strip the pants off of one of them and tie the legs. Then you and Larson and Randall gather up all the guns you can find. Put the gun in the pants so we can carry them easily."

"I think," said one of the men against the wall, "that they put extra guns and ammunition in the change booth." He sounded eager to establish a feeling of cooperation.

"Check it," Egen said curtly to Pete.

It didn't take the three of them long to gather up all the guns and the ammunition. They filled the pair of pants which Pete carried.

"You keep the guns," Egen told Pete. He turned to face the group against the wall. "Some of you men take the lanterns and start leading the way up the tunnel. Jack, you go with them. Stop when you reach the stairs at Penn Station. The rest of you follow. If anybody needs help, help them. Get going."

Within a few minutes, all of them were down on the tracks and heading north. Egen, Johnny and Bob, now using their flashlights, and Pete carrying the guns brought up the rear.

"It worked out pretty good," Egen said with satisfaction. "There must be about fifty of them there and we finished off about two hundred and fifty of the best trouble-makers. Including Atkins." There was some kind of special satisfaction in his voice as he said the last sentence.

Nobody said anything.

"You two guys did all right," Egen went on. "Keep it up and you might be good cops yet."

"Who wants it?" Johnny Larson asked. "I'd rather be a Boy Scout. Cops stink."

"Your brother was a cop," Egen said sharply.

"Sure," Johnny said easily. "My brother was a cop. My old man was a union man. They both died. You want to make a big deal out of it?"

Nothing more was said on the long march back to Thirty-fourth Street. When they reached the stairs, they stopped long enough for one of the cops to go ahead and warn the guards in Gimbels that they were coming. Then they marched up stairs, stopping outside of the store basement.

"Take them inside, Larson and Randall," Egen said crisply. "You can have the wounded taken care of and then scatter them through the group. Tell all your men to keep an eye on them for the next several days. *That's an order.*"

"We'll take care of it," Johnny said. He managed to make it sound like obedience and insolence at the same time.

The three cops went off down the passageway and Johnny and Bob led the others inside. The doctors were awakened and set to work on the wounded in one corner of the store. Wardens and former group leaders were awakened and assigned the job of distributing the others throughout the store.

It was another hour before they had everyone settled down. Bob and Johnny saw very little of each other during that hour. Then they met near the Sixth Avenue entrance of the store. They lit cigarettes and looked at each other, each of them aware of the other's tiredness.

"It was quite a night," Johnny said. "What time is it?"

Bob looked at his watch. "Time for my watch. Go grab yourself some sleep."

"I can use it," Johnny admitted.

They were silent for a minute. The smoke from their cigarettes drifted lazily in the air.

"Johnny," Bob said, "was it anything like that in Korea?"

"Yeah. Very much like it, except that we weren't underground."

"I was behind a desk in the Pentagon," Bob said, "and I often wondered. How does it make you feel? What happened tonight."

"The same as you," Johnny said, grinning at him. "Sick to my stomach. Well, I'll see you in four hours." He marched off toward the sleeping forms on the floor.

## Chapter Fourteen

THERE WERE SIXTEEN MARKS on the wall of Gimbels basement when Bob Randall decided to take a chance. Although it was two weeks since the attack, the physicist had kept insisting that no one should risk himself. But it had been several days since it had been mentioned so Bob decided to try again. So when it was Johnny's turn at watch, he went in search of the blonde physicist. He found her sitting alone in a corner of the basement, scribbling on a sheet of paper.

"What are you doing?" he asked as he came up.

"Just working out something on my slide rule," she answered.

"What?"

She bit her lip. "I expect you'll think I'm crazy, but I was trying to work out how soon we could expect the first babies to be born down here. I mean ones that were also conceived here, but not counting the rapings."

Bob laughed. "No, I don't think you're crazy. But I didn't know you could work out things like that on a slide rule."

"There are mathematical probabilities involved and anything that can be reduced to mathematics can be worked out on a slide rule."

"What conclusion did you come to?"

She smiled. "My figures show that the first baby should be born nine months and two days from the time we entered the subways."

Bob laughed again. During the last week or so he'd found that he could once more laugh occasionally. It was a good feeling. "Well, it looks as if everyone wasn't paralyzed by the attack, if you're right," he said. "What about going upstairs today?"

She looked at him curiously. "Why are you so anxious to go up there?"

He thought a minute before answering. "I guess there are several reasons," he said. "On the lowest level, I think I'm just curious. I'd like to see what New York City

looks like. But that's not the most important. I'd like to take a radio up on the street level and see if there are any signals. There would be better reception there. And I'd like to know if it's possible to stay out there long enough so that maybe I can get through the Pennsylvania yard and look at the tunnel beneath the river."

"You really think that we can get out and away from the radiation?" she asked.

"Yes," he said.

"Why?"

"It makes sense," he said doggedly. "But I think it's more than that. The hope is a logical one—but without hope there is no life at all. I lost everything that had any meaning to me, but I find that I still want to go on living. I think that's right. Maybe that's the way that all life survives. The knowledge we have can't have any meaning if we don't use it to survive."

"Maybe you're right," she said slowly. "I've been sitting here thinking that knowledge doesn't have so much meaning. That a slide rule is best used to find out when a baby will be born. That it has been used too often to find out when a baby will die."

"The baby will also need knowledge when he grows up," Bob said. "But he needs to use it properly so that he won't die. At least, not before he's supposed to."

She was silent for a minute. "It should be safe for a short period," she said finally. "I don't really know and there is no way that I can be sure. If I knew how much radiation we started with I might be able to work it out, but I don't know." She put aside the paper and pencil and stood up. "Let's go and look at what was once New York City."

"But there's no reason for you to go," Bob protested. "I just wanted to check with you. I'm quite willing to go alone."

"I'm going," she said. "You have finally talked me into accepting some part of your hope. I'm not sure how much. But you can't now deny me the right to take part in my own hope. You lost the woman and the children you loved, while I lost only the profession I loved. I'm going."

"All right. Give me enough time to get a radio and I'll meet you back here. Don't tell anyone where we're going."



"I'm not that foolish."

Bob went out the side entrance of Gimbels and down the passageway to the drugstore. It had been gutted of many things, but the radios were still there. He quickly found one, made sure that it had batteries and then retraced his steps. He found Ruth Shawn waiting where he had left her. Without speaking, they went back through the side entrance. As though by common agreement they recognized that it would be better if no one saw where they were heading. They turned right and went on to the Sixth Avenue station. Bob flicked his light off as they hit it and they turned in and went slowly up the stairs near the other Gimbels entrance. Daylight was visible the minute they started up the stairs and became stronger as they reached the top, picking their way through the rubble. When they got to the top, they had to hesitate, shutting their eyelids against what seemed like a glare and then slowly opening them.

After a couple of minutes they were able to walk on out through the opening and onto the street.

It was almost too much. Bob's first sight was of the sky. It looked as it had always looked. It was a clear blue, with wispy white clouds floating around in the blueness, and there was the usual bright sun which he had known all of his life. Then his gaze came down to the ground level and it was like some realistic movie.

To those who had lived in New York the city represented a certain picture, mostly painted in outlines placed against the horizon. Now there were no more outlines. There was only a strange, alien flatness with here and there in the distance a charred skeleton to emphasize the buildings that were no more.

The streets in every direction were black and forbidding. In every direction there were blackened and broken bits that once had been buildings and had sent up smoke signals of help until there was nothing more to burn. In the distance there were ghosts; here a wall standing in dark splendor and there a shell representing some corporate tradition. And that was all. There was nothing else.

There were a few moments of nothing but awe before Bob remembered that there were other reasons why he was standing there. Belatedly he turned the switch on the radio he carried. There was a hum of power, then static

began to creep into the silence that hung over the city that was no more.

In the meantime, Bob looked in every direction for the sight of something he could recognize. New York City had been full of landmarks; now there were none. Nothing but little hills and valleys of rubbish, clumps of broken concrete and brick and twisted steel, looking as though it had been flung there by an angry god. That and the silence of a place where there was no living thing.

He turned the knob of the radio slowly, keeping the volume high, the static crackling. Once he thought he heard music, but he couldn't locate it again. He was giving all of his attention to the radio when Ruth Shawn grabbed him by the arm, her fingers digging into his muscles.

"Listen," she said.

He turned down the volume of the radio and listened. At first he heard nothing, then he heard a faint buzzing. It took him several minutes to relate it to anything he knew.

"There," the girl cried. "There!"

She was pointing skyward and he strained his eyes to follow the direction of her finger. And then he saw the tiny speck high in the sky and knew the buzzing was coming from it.

"It's a plane," she said. She sounded almost hysterical. "Somebody else is alive!"

He felt the excitement grab his own body and he wanted to start waving and shouting even though he knew that he would be invisible to those eyes up there. He repressed the desire and felt it express itself in the trembling of his muscles.

They watched until they could no longer see the speck moving across the heavens. Then he turned up the volume on the radio and began searching again, this time feverishly. But more static was his only reward.

"We'd better go back," Ruth Shawn said. "It's not safe to stay longer now."

He nodded and turned off the radio. They walked back down the stairway, picking their way through the rubble. They were both quiet as they walked back down the passageway.

"There are others alive," she said finally. "Do you realize what that means?"

"Yes," Bob said soberly. "It means there are people out

there who could help us but can't. You said yourself that they can't come into this area to search or anything else for possibly a year. So they can only help us if we first help ourselves in some way. To get out of here."

She looked at him. "For a minute I had forgotten that," she said. "You want to look at the tunnel?"

"Yes."

"Let's go," she said.

"It's not necessary for you to go," he said. "There's no point in more than one person going."

"You still need someone to tell you if you can go out to the tunnel," she said. "Let me get the ion chamber from Herbert and then we'll go."

Bob waited by the side entrance to Gimbels until she came back with the detector. Then they walked on down the passageway. When they reached the bank, they stopped and Bob told Egen what they had discovered up on the street level. He also told him what they were planning to do.

"All right," Egen said. "Go ahead. We'll talk about it when you come back. By that time we may have some other word."

"What?" Bob asked.

"Remembering what you said about Grand Central being the other spot where people could survive," he said, "we decided it was time to find out if there is anybody up there. If not, we could use the food up there, too. Anyway, we sent a group up the Eighth Avenue tracks to see what the situation is. Go ahead. But stop here on your way back."

Bob and the blonde went down the stairs to the Long Island track section. They could see the lights of the campers who had taken over the network of tracks just back of the platforms. They jumped down on the tracks and went ahead. Within a few minutes they came to the spot where the trains emerged into the yard. Some of the exits were completely blocked, although the one directly ahead was only partially so. There was just enough room for a man to get through. They walked up to the exit and looked out.

The yard was filled with rubbish, looking like the street above, but it would be possible to get through it. In the meantime, Ruth Shawn was busy with the ion chamber.

"Well," she said, "it's not the safest place in the world

but I guess you can go take a look. Only don't hang around. Make it as fast as you can."

"What would happen if I took a little longer?"

"Maybe nothing immediately. But if you have any idea that sometime in the future you'd like to have children again, just get back as quickly as you can."

"Okay," he said. He slipped through the hole in the exit and started across the yard. It was tricky going and he had to watch his every step. But before long he had reached the mouth of the tunnel going under the river. He stepped inside and clicked on his flashlight. He went only a few steps when the tunnel was blocked. He flashed his light on it and studied it. The blocking was solid and there was no way of telling how far it extended into the tunnel. But there seemed to be very little water at the bottom of it and that was the most reassuring part of it. After another minute of looking at it, he turned and retraced his steps.

Ruth Shawn was waiting at the exit as he slipped back through it. "What did you find?" she asked.

"The tunnel is blocked," he said, "but I don't think it's flooded, so we could dig our way out. Let's go talk about it."

They walked back along the track until they came to the platforms. Bob leaped up on it and helped her up. They went upstairs and made their way to the bank. Bob reported what he had found.

"Let's look at the whole situation," Egen said. "Everybody's pretty much under control since we got rid of the Subway Gang. We've got plenty of water. We've got enough canned food to last us for close to two months with careful rationing. We know that somebody else in the country is alive and can perhaps give us help."

"What about Grand Central Station?" Bob asked.

"That may be trouble," Egen said. "There are people there, all right. Our men didn't have any trouble finding them. But then the trouble started. Three of our men were killed before they could get away. So now they know that there are people down this way. They may try to raid us—especially if they don't have enough food."

"How soon," Bob asked, looking at Ruth Shawn, "can we start digging out that tunnel?"

"For any kind of safety," she said carefully, "I'd say not sooner than six weeks from the time of the explosion."

Even then the teams of workers shouldn't put in too many hours at a time."

"What if we tried to make it up above on the streets?" Egen asked.

She shrugged. "I don't know. I'd say much longer because you'd have to walk away from New York and that might take so long that everyone would get a dangerous dose of radiation. That may even be a problem after you get through the tunnel."

"What about other people getting in to rescue us?"

"The same thing applies. They'd probably have to walk into the city and there is again the question of time. I doubt if they could land anywhere here in the city, even with helicopters."

"But they would be able to land helicopters in New Jersey if we reached there, wouldn't they?" Bob asked.

"Maybe. It depends on where the bombs landed. We're assuming that they landed only on the city, but there may have been a number of them dropped on New Jersey or even farther to the west. Then the situation would change."

"Well," Bob said stubbornly, "we can only try. In the meantime, I'd like to make one suggestion."

"What?" Egen asked.

"This portable radio I used today is pretty small," he said. "In one of the stores here there must be a large one, you know the kind that's also short wave and has an aerial that pulls up. Let's find it and send someone upstairs every day to try to get signals."

Egen nodded.

"If part of the country is still undamaged," Bob went on, "wouldn't they keep a close watch on spots like this that were bombed?"

"Yes," Ruth Shawn said. "They'll probably watch and then send in observation teams as soon as it's safe to do so. However, it is possible that they might come too late for us if we have only enough food for two months."

"We should do something," Bob said, "to signal to them that we're alive. We saw a plane today. Maybe sometimes they fly lower. So we could make up some sort of flag and put it up on the street level where they might see it."

"What would we put it on?" Ruth Shawn asked. "There's nothing standing up there."

"So we could make a flagpole out of curtain rods or something that's down here."

"A good idea," Egen said. "Get some people in your groups to working on it. Now, Dr. Shawn, you say that in six weeks we can start digging through the tunnel?"

"I think so."

"That means four weeks from now. Good, we'll start planning on that. But no spreading of any of this until we are more certain."

Bob nodded. "What are you going to do about the danger of raids from Grand Central?"

"We're setting up guards in the Eighth Avenue subway," Egen said grimly. "But let's hope that is all that's needed. We've got enough food for two months, but only enough ammunition for about half that time if it starts getting rough."



## Chapter Fifteen

TWO WEEKS may sometimes seem like two years. That's the way it was in the subway. There was no natural light to mark the days from the nights, only the same deep darkness penetrated by the murky lights of lanterns. Morning and night had been arbitrarily set by time, but this did not keep their stay below ground from seeming to stretch into one long fearful night. So much had also happened since that day the air-raid alarm had sent them scurrying down the stairs in subway stations that it might have easily been a year.

It was almost the end of Johnny Larson's watch and he was sitting with his back against the wall, thinking about the period they'd all spent below ground. He was aware that as much had happened to him as in any other year of his life. And he felt as far away from that other life as if it had existed a year or more ago instead of a mere two weeks.

"Hi, Johnny," someone said.

He looked up and saw Eddie Herman, the little pick-pocket.

"Hi, Eddie," he said. "What's up?"

"Getting some water," Eddie said, indicating the pail he carried. "There's an old lady over there, she don't get around so good. I've been getting her water for her."

"Well, that's a switch," Johnny said. "You haven't slipped anything out of her purse yet?"

Eddie looked pained. "You know I wouldn't do that, Johnny. Dip into an old lady's purse just because she don't feel like going to get her own water. That wouldn't be right."

"You mean you ain't been picking any pockets?"

"No. I got to thinking, Johnny, and you was right. Down here it's like everybody was part of the same family and nobody ought to do a thing like that. Not in your own family. There's only one thing wrong with it."

"What's that?"

"If we ever get out of here," Eddie said, "I'm going to be all out of practice."

Johnny laughed.

"You ain't got no call to laugh," Eddie said. He sounded hurt. "We might get out and then I'd have to start making a living again. You wouldn't want me to get caught by the first mark I hit, would you?"

"No," Johnny said. "But I expect you'll get back into practice soon enough. I wouldn't worry about it."

"You really think so?" Eddie asked eagerly. "I was going to ask you what you thought about it. Well, I'd better get going. The old lady might be getting a thirst on." He walked off, swinging the bucket.

A few minutes later Bob Randall showed up. Johnny talked to him a few minutes, then strolled off. He'd gone only a few yards when he met Rita.

"Oh, I was coming to look for you," she said. "Are you still on watch?"

"Just finished," Johnny said.

"What were you going to do?"

"Nothing, I guess. Why?"

"Take me for a walk?"

"Sure. Where do you want to go?"

"Anywhere. Just so we can be off alone somewhere."

"Okay, baby," he said. They turned and walked out of the store. Johnny switched on his flashlight as they turned left. When they reached Saks there were lights inside and they could see several men working there.

"What's going on in there?" Rita asked.

"Fixing up churches," Johnny said. "Some of the people wanted to go to church, so we decided to give a spot in there to anyone who wanted it."

"How many churches?"

"I don't know. I guess there'll be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Salvation Army, maybe some others. Then I heard there were two guys who wanted to start new religions."

"You're going to let them?"

"I guess so. This ain't no place to say a guy can't have a religion if he wants it."

"I feel as if I'd just found a religion," Rita said as they passed Saks and walked on along the platform.

"Why?"

"There was a baby born about an hour ago. Did you know that?"

"No. Who had it?"

"A Mrs. Edward Pugh. It was a boy. She kept crying and saying it looked just like her husband, but she was crying for happiness. I guess just the idea that she still had part of her husband."

"How'd you know so much about it?" Johnny asked.

"I was helping the doctor deliver the baby. Connie and Herbert took a lantern apart and we heated water over it and I helped to deliver the baby. It was wonderful."

"Yeah?" Johnny said. He sounded amused. "What happened to the girl I heard talking one day about how she didn't care about anything except herself?"

"I did say that, didn't I?" she said. "It was pretty terrible of me. And it was true then. But I think I learned something from you, Johnny. Not so much from what you said, but just watching you."

"You'd have probably learned anyway."

"I don't know, but I'm glad I did learn. Maybe it's good for me that something like this did happen. Johnny, do you think we'll get out?"

"I think so. But I don't know when."

"Is it true that somebody's been upstairs?"

"Yeah. Bob Randall was up yesterday. For just a few minutes. It's not safe to stay longer."

"What was it like?"

"Like we imagined it only worse, he said."

"You know," she said thoughtfully, "I never knew anyone like you before. All the men I knew were actors or singers or writers, or the creeps in night clubs."

"You probably never wanted to know any longshoremen," Johnny said.

"That's probably true," she admitted. "I suppose I was a snob. But everything might have been different if I had known someone like you. You're the only real man I ever met."

"There must have been *some* others," he said drily.

"None. I guess we can start back now, Johnny. I just wanted to walk a little and get away from the crowd for a few minutes." They turned and started back.

"Johnny—" she said after a while.

"Yeah?"

"If we do get out of here, get somewhere that people can live normal lives, do you think that you and I might see each other once in a while?"

"Why not?"

"I don't know," she said. "I know that you had a girl and that you must have been in love with her."

"That's all in the past," Johnny said. His voice held only a trace of harshness. "Everything that happened in New York City is in the past and over and done with."

"I'm sorry," she said softly. She reached out and took his hand. "I didn't bring it up to hurt you."

"You didn't hurt me," he said.

"I think it might be nice," she said, "once we get out of here. You and me. I don't think I will ever be selfish again. I think I could be the kind of girl you like."

"A night club canary and a longshoreman?" he said.

"Why not? What's the difference what you do? If two people like each other, that's all that counts."

"Maybe," he said, but he put his arm around her shoulders as they went on to Gimbel's.

## Chapter Sixteen

IT WAS A FEW DAYS LATER that Bob Randall went down to the bank, as he did every day, to report how things were going and to get any new orders. This time there was some news. That morning the man who had gone upstairs with the radio had received a signal from a station somewhere in New England. There had been too much interference for him to hear much, but there was at least evidence that one station was still operating. They had now appointed several other men to take turns with the radio and perhaps they would get some news on what was happening in the war.

When he left and walked back along the passageway, Bob passed the side door and walked on to Sixth Avenue. As he reached it, he met a man coming from the direction of Saks. Flashing his light on the man he saw it was Smathers.

"Where have you been?" he asked.

"To church," Smathers said. He peered at Bob. "Oh, it's you, Randall. I'm glad that I've run into you. I've been meaning to look you up for several days."

"Why?"

"Well, I wanted to apologize to you. For those first few days. I'm aware now that I acted pretty badly."

"You don't owe me an apology," Bob said curtly, "but you might apologize to Miss Lomer."

"I have," Smathers said. "I told her how I felt several days ago."

"What brought all this about?" Bob asked. "Church?"

"Yes," Smathers said. "I hadn't been to church since I was a child and the other day I thought I'd just drop around and see what it was like. I can't tell you how glad I am that I did, for I found God again and it has brought me a peace I never knew."

"I'm glad," Bob said. He didn't know what else to say. He still didn't like Smathers.

"It's been a real experience," Smathers said. "If we ever

get out of here, I can tell you that I'm going to live a different sort of life. I guess I was always a pretty ruthless businessman and I made a lot of money. But this experience has taught me that there are a lot of things you can't buy with money. If I ever get out of here, I'm going to spend my time doing some other kind of work. Something that people can benefit from."

"That's fine," Bob said, but he was no longer paying any attention to Smathers. He'd seen the Gimbels door open and a figure come out. He'd caught a glimpse of the face in the backwash of the light she carried. It was Nancy Lynn.

He stepped past Smathers and went to meet her. "You shouldn't be walking out here alone," he said.

She smiled at him. "Why not? There's no danger any more, is there?"

"We don't know," he said. "Everyone has been quiet for some time now, but there's still no way of knowing when someone in there might crack. None of the women should go out alone."

"Then come and sit with me a minute," she said. "You can protect me."

"Where were you going?"

"Over to the subway stairs. I've been coming over and sitting on them whenever I feel the need to be alone. Everyone in there is nice, but once in a while I like to be alone for a few minutes."

"I know how you feel," he said. They walked across the platform and sat on the top steps. Both turned off their lights. Bob lit two cigarettes and passed one to her, their fingers touching as she took it.

"There's less to do now that everyone is calmer and more cooperative," she said. "I'm not sure but what I found it better when I was kept so busy."

"I'm sure that's true," he said. "I'm still kept busy and I know I'd hate to have it any other way. I doubt if we were meant to live underground like moles."

"We haven't had too much chance to talk lately," Nancy said. "How have you been feeling?"

"Fine."

"No, I didn't mean that way. I meant—" She hesitated as though not knowing how to express it.

"You mean—everything in the past?" he asked. He was



aware of a reluctance on his own part to put a more definite name to the things of the past.

"Yes," she said.

He was silent for a minute, drawing on his cigarette and letting the smoke drift from his mouth. "It's difficult to put it into words," he said finally. "I was realizing the other day that I feel as if the bombing was something that happened a long time ago. It seems at least a year ago. I don't know why it should be so. Maybe because so many things have happened down here, so many changes in me."

"I know. It seems the same way to me. I thought it might be some kind of protection set up by the mind. Putting it farther away makes it seem less horrible than it was because with time we forget. Something like that."

"Maybe," he said. He was silent for another minute. "As for the rest, I suppose I feel as one does about such things. I miss Alice and little Peter and Maria, yet I know that they are gone and nothing will ever bring them back. I don't suppose I'll ever be able to think of them without sadness, but I suppose in time that will diminish. I suppose that time does do some healing."

"Of course it does," she said softly. "Do you ever think that they might be still alive?"

"No," he said. "There were times in the beginning when I would find myself thinking that they might have escaped somehow. But I think even then I knew that was sheer madness. And since I was upstairs the other day, I know with finality that nothing could have stayed above surface and survived. And there were no places like this way out on Long Island. We lived way out beyond the subway system. I doubt if that would have helped anyway. I imagine that Long Island got it worse than Manhattan. We know there was at least one direct hit on the Island and Dr. Shawn thinks that none of the bombs came closer than five or six miles from here."

"She's nice, isn't she?"

"I guess so," he said. "I think she was having problems for a while. Maybe because she is a physicist and felt some sort of responsibility, the way some physicists did after Hiroshima. But she seems to be picking up since she's become convinced that we might get away."

"Do you think we will?" she asked.

"Yes," he said firmly.

"What will you do then?" she asked.

"I don't know, Nancy. I haven't thought that far ahead. I probably won't until we get out."

"Will you go back into advertising?"

"I haven't thought about it," he said. He puffed on the cigarette again. "But now that you mention it, I doubt if I will. I think that's a part of the past that's vanished too—or at least the person that I was then is gone and so I probably couldn't go back to it. I'm not sure."

"I think I understand," she said. "I've been asking myself what I'll do if we ever get out. I don't know either, but I too know that in some way I'll be a different person than I was that day I ran into the subway when the sirens went off. Do you think that's true of all of us down here?"

"I don't know," he said. "But I don't think so. I think that a lot of people go through earth-shattering experiences and when they're over go right back to where they were before. It must be like that or the world would learn more from its catastrophes." He dropped his cigarette and ground it out with his foot.

"Maybe that's it," she said.

There was some sort of faint sound from down in the subway. Bob swung his submachine gun into position and flicked on his light. He caught a brief glimpse of two shinning eyes and then a big brown body scurrying out of the light.

"There's another reason you shouldn't come out alone," he said.

"What was it?"

"A rat. And a big one. They must have discovered the place up the tracks where we dump our garbage. And they're liable to become another problem if we don't get out of here soon."

"Why?"

"Their regular sources of food, like the sewers, must be cut off. God only knows how many million of them are under New York City. Or how vicious they are. If they ever get hungry enough, they're liable to try to move into Gimbels, too."

She shuddered and he put his arm around her shoulder.

From the direction of the main terminal there was a sudden burst of gunfire.

"Get inside," Bob said. He headed her toward Gimbels and then he ran for the passageway. He could hear more gunfire, sounding like a regular battle. As he passed the side entrance to Gimbels other men came running out, their guns and flashlights in hand.

"What is it?" one of them shouted.

"Don't know," Bob said. "Maybe a gang from Grand Central."

They were soon aware that the sounds of the battle were coming from somewhere near the bank, but before they reached it the shooting stopped. All was quiet when they got there, signaling with their lights as they approached.

They were met at the door by a grim-faced Lew Egen.

"Grand Central?" Bob asked.

"No," Egen said. "This bunch was from right downstairs. They were trying to grab more food. They killed Jack Martin and Frank Robb before we could drive them off."

"Where'd they get guns?" Bob asked.

"We gave them to them," Egen said. "And two cops down there were with them. They don't have too many guns—but they won't need them when they do come back."

"Why?"

"There's over a thousand of them down there. If they all rush us we can't possibly shoot enough to stop them. And we can't use the same tactics we did on that gang in the Sixth Avenue subway."

"We'll send more guards down here," Bob said.

"Even if we fill the bank with guards," Egen said, "it won't be enough. No, we'll have to find another way to handle this."

"Why not move the food to Gimbels?"

"That's what I was planning," Egen said. "Everything is well enough organized so we can safely keep the food there. We can place extra guards out in the passageway to warn of any attack. And there we'll be in a controlling position. Even if they have a thousand men, they can't attack spread out. We can mow them down easily. And soon starve out the rest."

"That ought to work," Bob said. "Can't we talk to

them? Our only hope of escape—and theirs too—is through there.”

“If you’d been here,” Egen said grimly, “you would have seen how much talking you could’ve done with them. Go back and get people to come down here and carry the food to Gimbels.”

## Chapter Seventeen

THE MEN AND WOMEN from Gimbels moved in long, steady lines to the bank and returned with cans of food. Some had baskets and other containers; many used pieces of material to make a crude sack which could be flung over the shoulder. Connie Lomer and Herbert Sanders were among those transferring the food. They had taken a large piece of material from the store and carried it, filled with cans, between them.

"What do you suppose started this?" Connie asked as they started up the passageway.

"I don't know," Herbert said. "I should have thought they would have moved those people up here when all of us moved together into Gimbels. It must be uncomfortable living down on those tracks and then just the separation may have contributed to it. I believe that people always find it easier to fight when they don't know each other. It becomes easy to imagine the other person is different than you are and doesn't like you."

"You are very smart," Connie said.

Herbert flushed. "I'm not," he said. "It's just that I've done a lot of reading. I never had any special hobbies and we never had many friends so I read."

"That's a part of smartness, too," Connie said firmly. "Is it true that there may be a chance we'll get out of here before too long? Everybody is talking about it, but nobody seems to know anything for certain."

"I'm not sure," Herbert said. "As you know I'm not a part of the committee that's doing the planning. But Bob Randall believes that we will and I expect he knows. He thinks we might be able to do it in a few weeks."

"I hope so," she said. She laughed softly. "You know, Herbert, it's strange. When the attack first came I don't think I much cared whether I lived or died. Then for a week or so the only thing I felt was that I was glad it had happened. The past was destroyed and that was all that I could think of. But more recently I've been thinking

about the future. I think it's the first time in my life I've ever done that. And it's a good feeling."

"I'm sure it is," Herbert said. "And I'm sure that you will make a good future for yourself."

"Most of the credit for any new feelings I have," she said, "goes to you and Bob Randall."

"I'm not aware of having done anything, but if I did help I'm happy it is so."

"You did," she said firmly.

They walked a few more yards in silence. "You know," Herbert said then, "I think that I may be rather sorry to leave the subway when it's time."

"Why?" she asked in astonishment.

"I've been thinking about it," he said. "I've really started to face how empty my life has been since we've been down here. I've never done anything but been a bookkeeper and there isn't much fun or a sense of doing anything in merely adding up two columns and seeing that they balance year after year. And yet that is how I spent eight hours a day, five or six days a week, all of my adult life."

"So you can do something else," she said.

"I don't know anything else," he said. "And at my age it's too late to learn a new trade."

"Nonsense," she said briskly.

"It's not only that," he said. "I've always wasted the rest of my life in the same way. I've been realizing since we've been down here that it was also true of my marriage. Mrs. Sanders and I married each other because we were both afraid of other people. I used to think that we had an ideal marriage, but now I realize that we merely had calmed our fears. It must have been as empty for her as it was for me. But neither of us was aware, or would let ourselves be aware, that we'd been afraid of trying to reach for the things that we wanted out of life."

They reached the store and filed down to the lower level where they emptied their improvised bag. There were other people there, neatly stacking the cans of food against the wall. Connie and Herbert went back upstairs and started down the passageway.

"Don't you realize," Connie said, "that when you say that you will be sorry to leave here that you are still being afraid to try to reach for the things you want?"

"That is possibly true," he said. "But I'm much older now than when I first started making such decisions. And



I think I've been happier down here than any time in my life. And it's because I've felt useful for the first time, I've felt that I was a part of the stream of life."

"So you can keep on being useful," she said.

"It's not so easy now."

"Look," she said. "You must know, or have an idea, of what kind of a woman I've been. I—"

"You mustn't," he interrupted gently. "Whatever happened to you has been wiped out by what has happened to all of us. You mustn't keep attacking yourself with it. The only thing I know about you is that you are a wonderful, warm woman. And beautiful."

"But if my past is wiped out, so is yours," she said.

"How old are you?" he asked abruptly.

"Twenty-eight. Why?"

"I'm forty-seven," he said harshly.

"So what?" she said. "You make it sound as if you were seventy. So you're forty-seven. That means that you could have another twenty or thirty good years. Maybe more. Just because you threw away the first forty-seven is no excuse for throwing away the next twenty. And if my past was destroyed, so was yours."

"But—" he began.

"Don't give me that," she said almost angrily. "What are you going to do if we get out of here? Go sit in a rocking chair and rock back and forth for thirty years, feeling sorry for yourself? You just got through telling me, in so many words, that down here you learned to be a man. Are you going to forget what you learned the minute you get up into the sunlight again?"

"You don't understand," he said. "I was trying to explain something else. Perhaps you don't understand it because you're only twenty-eight, while I'm forty-sev—"

"I understand very well," she said softly. She reached down and took his hand and they walked that way to the bank.

## Chapter Eighteen

THE BATTLE with the people who were living on the Long Island tracks was in its second day, but no one had any doubts but that it would soon be over. Cut off from regular food and water supplies they could not last long. Five times they had rushed Gimbels basement and five times had been beaten back. Each time, the number of dead was appalling, especially on the part of those from the Long Island tracks. Not many were killed from Gimbels because they had all the advantage of position and more guns.

When the first battle was over they had carried the corpses down to the Hudson Tube level, as they had during the fights with the Subway Gang, and there they got another surprise. That level and the train standing in the station was infested with huge rats attracted by the bodies piled there. Most of the rats had run at the sight of the lights, but a few huge gray ones had turned and showed fight. They were quickly dispatched with one of the submachine guns, but just the sight of those rats had produced more fear in them than all the raids from other men.

For the first time, they realized that the rats might prove more of a pressure than the rationing of food.

In the meantime, Egen and the men who had manned the bank had moved into Gimbels and taken their place among the others. This had brought about another change in their society. Before it had been recognized that Egen and the remaining cops were functioning as a board of directors overseeing the leadership that Johnny Larson and Bob Randall supplied. But this changed in a subtle fashion when the cops moved into the store. On the surface it was the same; they still held their meetings to discuss everything, but more and more it was Johnny and Bob who made the decisions.

After the fifth battle, they again carried the bodies down into the Hudson Tubes. The stench was so bad by this time that nobody lingered over the job. And again the

huge rats scampered away from the lights and those that didn't were killed.

"Those damn things give me the creeps," Johnny said to Bob as they left. "I get an itchy finger every time I see one of them."

"Maybe it's just as well you do," Bob said. "They're bad medicine. I'd hate to think how it would be if they get hungry enough to start coming upstairs."

"How many do you suppose are down there?"

"There ought to be millions," Bob said. "They've been breeding and getting fat on the sewers for enough years."

They'd been back in the store for a couple of hours when Johnny came around to where Bob had just finished washing out his shirt and hanging it up to dry.

"Egen's taking care of the watch," he said. "Come on. I want to show you something."

"Just a minute," Bob said. He slipped into the one other shirt he had and buttoned it. He picked up the submachine gun and hung it on his shoulder. "Okay. What is it?"

"You'll see," Johnny said. "Something I think will amuse you. A couple of our eggheads."

"Eggheads?"

"Yeah. You know, domes, big brains. A couple of professors. I remember their names from the lists we made up. You know how people always keep saying that these guys don't know enough to come in out of the rain? Well, these two guys have got a good thing going for them. If we have to stick down here, these guys have it made."

"What are you talking about?" Bob asked.

"You'll see in a minute."

They had reached the Saks store basement and Johnny headed for the door.

"I thought you'd said this had been turned over to religions?" Bob said.

"It has. All the regular religions, plus some others. They even got a guy here who worships cows, and where the hell are you going to find a cow in a subway? Then a couple of guys wanted to start new religions and nobody could find a good reason to refuse so they were given a period too. It's time for one of them now and the other one has the time right after him. You'll see." He opened the door and went in with Bob following him.

There were already several men and women in the

basement, although the women outnumbered the men two to one. Johnny and Bob sat on the floor over in a corner and waited. In the center of the room was a structure that might serve as an altar, and since it had no decoration it could have served as any sort of altar.

A few more people straggled in until there were finally thirty or forty people sitting around the empty altar. Then the door opened and a big, red-faced man entered. He had a bushy beard. He was wrapped in a piece of scarlet material and carried a sheaf of papers in his hand. He went directly to the altar. He beckoned to several in the audience and when they stepped forward he handed them the sheaf of papers. They went around fastening them to the walls and several were fixed to the altar.

By straining, Bob could make out the drawings and got his first shock. They were rather crude drawings of sexual organs.

"What's going on?" he whispered.

"You'll see in a minute," Johnny whispered back.

Soon all the drawings were in place and the helpers had resumed their places in the audience. The man in the altar drew himself up and looked at them.

"*Crissabitque tibi excussis pulcherrima lumbia*," he intoned.

The audience repeated the line in singsong voices.

"*Hoc anno primum experta puella virum*," he said.

"*Hoc anno primum experta puella virum*," they echoed.

"What the hell?" Bob exclaimed under his breath.

"Egghead stuff," Johnny said, grinning. "I don't dig it, but I think it's something that if it was in English it would be written on the wall in the men's room. But it really sends these characters."

"My friends," the man on the altar said, "in the name of Koovos, the eternal Father, and Priapus, the eternal Son, and in the name of Fodor, the Great Lingam, I welcome you."

"He's Fodor," Johnny whispered. "He was a professor of some kind of history."

"What," demanded the man explosively, "is the beginning of all life? What is the root of our very existence? It is time, my friends, that we cast aside all of our false gods who have led us to the position in which we now find ourselves and that we become pure and ready for the

life of the gods which will be denied those who continue to follow the wrong path. It is only by subduing and extenuating the terrestrial principle that we can hope to give liberty and vigor to the celestial that we may ascend directly to the fabulous world of the future, pure and unincumbered."

"What's he talking about?" Bob whispered.

"He's a little hard to understand at first," Johnny whispered, "but when he hits the punch line, you'll dig it."

"It was the great Pindar," the man continued, "who said that the race of men and gods is one, that both breathe from one mother and differ only in power. The grand and exalted system of a general first cause, universally expanded, was the means by which even Jupiter was transformed into the god who thundered from Mount Ida and was lulled to sleep in the embraces of his wife.

"In the same way, my friends, the great Bacchus ceased to be a mere rural god and became a god of all times and all worlds, standing among the nymphs beside the fountains, and expressing the fertility of the world. It was written in the olden days that he and all those who represent the great Koovos on earth should honor him by a liberal display and a general communication of his bounties and that brides should be brought to him that they might be rendered fruitful by their communion with the divine nature and capable of fulfilling the duties of their station. What do you say to this, my friends?"

*"Crissabitque tibi excussis pulcherrima lumbia, Hoc anno primum experta puella virum,"* they shouted at him.

"Amen," he said. "Now who among you wishes to honor Koovos this night?"

It seemed to Bob that every woman in the audience was on her feet at once, clamoring to get his attention.

"Peace," the man shouted, spreading his hands over them. He waited until they had calmed down. "Tonight the favor of Koovos and the Great Lingam showers its beneficial light of life upon—you and you." He indicated two women in the group who proudly stepped forward to stand beside the man on the altar.

"The blessings of Koovos on all of you," the man said. "Go thou forth and be fertile." He put an arm around each of the women with him and the three of them walked majestically out of the basement. The others remained

seated until he had left. Then they got up, gathered the sheets of paper that had been put up and left. Johnny and Bob were alone in the basement.

"Get it?" Johnny asked. "He goes through that jazz every night just to pick which two women he's going to spend the night with. And they go for it. He's got them fighting over who'll get the chance to go with him. I've heard a lot of guys make passes, but I got to admit he's got a new switch on it."

"That's all there is to it?" Bob asked.

"That's all. He's got it down to a science. He makes just about the same speech every night and that's how it ends up."

"What about the others?" Bob asked curiously.

"As near as I can figure out, the other guys get second pick. So they all go out and roll in the hay somewhere."

"How come somebody hasn't yet raised hell about it?" Bob asked.

"I guess they ain't stumbled on to it yet, but sooner or later some priest or minister will pay him a little visit of respect and then the feathers'll start flying."

"I'm not sure we shouldn't do something about it anyway," Bob said doubtfully.

"What's the use? They'd probably do the same thing anyway and maybe all this stuff keeps them from cooking up other things that would mean more trouble. But wait till you see the next guy."

"You mean there's another one?"

"Yeah. He'll be here any minute. He's got a different pitch and he gets a little long-winded, but you'll get the angle right away and then we can slip out."

In a few minutes people began coming into the basement. The first ones looked curiously at Johnny and Bob, but after that no one paid any attention to them. Finally, when there were about thirty of them there, a tall slender man entered. He went to the altar and looked over his little group.

"Good evening, fellow worshipers," he said in a soft voice. "I am glad to see that we have a few new faces with us tonight. The subject of our sermon this evening is: Free will is a subjective illusion." He paused, looking at them.

"This guy's got his own method," Johnny whispered.



"He always has a sermon which he opens with, then he goes to the main subject, and after that he starts on the sermon again and works back to the point half an hour later."

"It was Sir James Jeans," the man said, "who stated that the Great Architect of the universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician. There is a beautiful example of this. The conservation of energy, in which nothing is lost, is the key to the balanced and ordered universe in which everything can be determined. To give up this idea would be to admit a world in which anything could happen.

"Now we have just lived through a wonderful example of this in the bombings which sent us down here. None of the energy which was released by the bombs was lost. Nor was anything destroyed by the release of that energy. The shape and appearance of our world may have been changed by it, but nothing was lost or destroyed.

"The world of mathematics contains many symbols but the most important one is the triangle. The triangle is simple, mysterious and eternal. The sum of the three angles of a triangle is one hundred and eighty degrees—or equal to a *straight* angle. It is the triangle which offers Man a guide through his life. Every family unit should be a triangle, beginning with three persons instead of two. That way—and that way only—lies happiness.

"The conservation of energy, which I mentioned a moment ago, is the key to *your* personal happiness and—"

"He's going to get long-winded now," Johnny whispered. "Let's get out of here."

They stood up and tiptoed out of the basement while the man's voice droned on.

"What was that all about?" Bob asked.

"You didn't get it?"

"Not really," Bob said. "I understood most of what he said, but what was he driving at? Especially with that business that the family should be a triangle?"

"The same thing the other guy is," Johnny said. "The kind of triangle he's talking about is supposed to be one man and two women. And when he's all through with his sermon tonight he'll go off with two women and make his own little triangle."

Bob laughed. "I don't know why they gave themselves

so much trouble. They should have decided they were Mohammedans and then they could have claimed the right to have four wives."

"I told you they're eggheads," Johnny said. "They got to do everything the hard way. And maybe they're afraid that four women would be more than they could handle."

"I don't think it's that simple, Johnny. Besides, you know I've sometimes been called an egghead."

"Yeah, but you're different."

"That's part of what I mean. Just saying they're eggheads doesn't explain it. And I'm not sure that we shouldn't do something about it—watch them, if nothing else. I don't think anyone has to worry about strange religious groups, even like those, normally. But down here almost anything could get out of hand and—"

He was interrupted by a burst of gunfire from down the passageway. It sounded near at hand and as they dashed past the entrance they saw the orange flashes of the gunfire. They ran into Gimbels and down toward the side door.

Egen and several other men were there, lying on the floor and firing out into the passageway. Egen saw them as they arrived.

"Go to the back," he said. "We're pushing them back and you'll be able to finish it off from there."

Johnny and Bob ran on through the store and reached the back door. The two guards there were peering nervously through the doors. Ordering them to stay there, Johnny and Bob went through the door and hugged the wall. There was a short passageway leading into the main one. They could hear the gunfire but only saw reflections of the fire, so they knew that no one was at least right in front of the short passageway. They crossed to the far wall and inched along it until they reached the main passageway.

Johnny dropped to the floor and crawled forward to where he could shove his gun around the corner. Bob stood over him, straddling his body, so that he could do the same. He took a quick look around the corner, pushing the gun ahead of him.

The attackers were a few yards to their left, toward the main terminal. There were no lights so it was impossible to see them, but from the gun flashes there seemed

to be quite a few of them. They were also flat on the floor, for the flashes were all within inches of it.

"You ready?" Johnny asked in a low voice.

"Yes."

"Okay, let's go."

The two submachine guns began to chatter. Somebody screamed, his voice piercing the harsh sound of the guns. Johnny and Bob alternated bursts on their guns and the answering flashes thinned out and then stopped.

There was a moment of silence and then they could hear running feet fading down the passageway. Johnny sent a final burst after them.

After a few minutes a light flashed from the side entrance to Gimbels. Nothing happened.

"I guess they're gone," Egen called. "Might as well come on back, boys."

They stepped out and walked up to the side entrance. As they entered, they saw two men still lying on the floor.

"They got it?" Johnny asked.

"Yeah," Egen said. "Right in the beginning of the attack. After that, they couldn't get close enough to shoot in through the door. I don't think these were the guys from the Long Island tracks."

"Grand Central?" Bob asked.

"Yeah."

"Why?"

"Too many guns," Egen said. "They had a lot more than have been used in any of the other attacks. And they were a lot more careful as if they didn't know where they were going. I don't think they even knew we were in here until they got where they could see the lights."

"If that's the case," Johnny said, "let's go after them and give them a little more to remember us by."

"Well," Egen said uncertainly. "What do you think, Randall?"

"I agree with Johnny."

"Get fifty guys and give them guns," Johnny said. "That ought to be enough to do it. And it won't be so many we'll get in each others way. They'll probably snoop around down in the station long enough for us to get there."

"They probably have more men there," Egen said. "They might even get together with the guys down on the Long Island tracks."

"Maybe," Johnny said. "But we'll have the advantage of a surprise. Let's get going."

Egen turned and walked off without another word. It didn't take him long to round up fifty men and arm them. With Johnny, Bob and Egen in the lead they started down the passageway. They used lights until after they got past the bodies sprawled on the floor. Then they switched the lights off and went on in the dark, feeling their way along the walls.

They had almost reached the end of the passageway when there was sporadic fire from somewhere ahead. They stopped. The gunfire continued, but not heavily.

"They must have run into the other guys," Johnny said.

"Maybe they'll knock each other off," Egen said, "but I don't suppose we have that kind of luck."

"No," Johnny said. "Let's go ahead. Maybe we can teach both of them a lesson."

They went ahead, going down the stairs, then proceeding carefully as the gunfire came nearer. They finally reached the edge of the IRT station where it opened into the huge Long Island terminal. They could see the flashes of fire from the guns ahead of them.

"Spread out," Johnny said, his voice low, "and everybody get down. Egen?"

"Yeah?"

"Wouldn't you say the shots coming from the left are probably the guys from down on the tracks?"

"Yeah," Egen said after a minute. "They look like they were coming from the stairways."

"Okay. Let's take the Grand Central guys first. Go with these other guys, Egen, and give the word when you're ready. Tell everybody to shoot at the flashes to their right."

Word was passed along and then quietly the men began to fan out. Johnny and Bob and several others moved only a few feet then stretched out on the floor. Bob steadied his submachine gun on the floor and waited.

"All right," Egen yelled. "Let them have it."

Bob began pressing the trigger, sending short bursts toward the gun flashes. Next to him he heard the clatter of Johnny's gun and farther along the sharper tone of the revolvers.

It didn't take long. In a minute they heard someone

shout and then there was no more answering fire. Even so, they sprayed the darkness for another few rounds.

"All right, hold it," Egen said. "And everybody stay where he is."

Silence once again settled over the big terminal. In the distance, toward Eighth Avenue, they heard the faint sound of running footsteps. They faded out completely. And still they remained quiet.

"Hey, Egen," a voice yelled, "is that you?"

"Yeah," Egen answered.

"This is Dick Stokes. What the hell was going on? Wasn't that you shooting at us in the beginning?"

"I don't want to talk to you, you lousy yellow-belly cop," Egen snapped. "There's nothing worse than a cop who goes bad."

"I couldn't help it," the voice said defensively. "What's been going on up there?"

"That was a gang from Grand Central," Johnny Larson said. "We just chased them off."

"Who's that?"

"Larson," Johnny said. "I think you're a lousy, yellow-belly cop, too, but I'll talk to you. How long is it since you people had anything to eat?"

"Too long," the voice admitted.

"Then why don't you get wise and give it up? You can't win and all you can do is make it tougher for everybody to ever get out of this hole in the ground."

There was a moment of silence. "We'd like to give up," the voice said finally, "but a lot of people down here are afraid you'll shoot us if we surrender."

"Wait a minute," Egen said gruffly.

There was another silence and then Johnny and Bob heard someone drawing near to them. They tensed, swinging their guns around in the direction of the sound.

"Larson, Randall," Egen said in a harsh whisper.

"Here," Johnny said.

The steps came closer, then stopped. "There's one way we can maybe do it," Egen said, "and still cover ourselves if they're trying a trick. You two can take most of the men and string out along the station toward Eighth. That'll let you cover most of the stairs up from the tracks. I'll get about eight guys to turn on their flashlights and cover the one stair here at the back. Then they can come

up one at a time and I'll search them. We can send one guy back to tell the other guards to get ready to receive them. But if they do try any tricks, you guys can mow them down."

"But if they do try a trick," Bob said, "they'll probably kill you and the men holding the flashlights."

"Yeah, I guess they might," Egen said drily.

"It's still better than risking hundreds," Johnny said. "We'll do it. You go back down the line, Egen, and count off the men you want. We'll pass along the order to the rest of them."

Egen was gone without another word. Johnny gave orders to the man next to him and told him to pass them along. "And tell them to tell Egen to count to a hundred after he gets this message," he added. "Bob, you take off first. I'll follow with my hand on your shoulder."

They stood up. Bob tried to visualize the station to get his bearings and then started walking slowly, edging over toward where he thought the bank ought to be. He kept his hand out in front of him and a moment later felt the glass window. Then he straightened out and walked until he thought he had covered enough distance. He stopped and turned to face the center of the station.

"Stokes," Egen called a minute later.

"Yeah?" the voice said.

"We're going to give you a chance to surrender. Nothing will happen to you unless you try to pull something. You know where to reach the stairs that bring you up at the back of the station here? The last exit from down there?"

"Yes. I know it."

"All right. We're going to turn flashlights on it. Come up one at a time and with your hands on your head. Each one of you will be searched and unarmed. Then you can go on to Gimbels and get fed. But no tricks."

"We accept," the voice said. "We'll get started right now."

"Okay," Egen said. "Turn on the lights."

Several flashlights went on at once, they searched aimlessly for a minute, then found the stairway and centered on it. A moment later a man appeared, blinking in the light, his hands clasped on top of his head. Another man appeared behind him.



"One at a time," Egen snapped. "Keep twenty paces apart." He searched the man quickly and threw a knife on the floor. "Next," he said.

And the long line of people began to march weakly up from the tracks.

## Chapter Nineteen

THERE WERE THIRTY-FIVE MARKS on the wall in Gimbels basement. Now everybody who had survived in the Penn Station area was quartered in the one place. They had been mixed in with the others and there had been no more trouble from them. But there had been five more raids from Grand Central. None of them had been costly in terms of lives of the people in Gimbels, but it increased the tension of everyone. And it was beginning to make Bob jumpy because he realized it might be serious interference with their plan to dig their way through the tunnel.

Finally he caught Egen and Johnny together that thirty-fifth day. They were both on guard near the side entrance. He squatted down beside them and lit a cigarette.

"Aren't we about due for another raid from Grand Central?" he asked.

"Probably in the next day or two," Johnny said. "Why?"

"Tell me something else," Bob said. "How large a gang would you say it's been each time they've attacked?"

"Never very big," Johnny said. "I'd guess maybe fifty of them. That's a good size to hit and run the way they've been doing."

"Fifty to a hundred, I'd say," Egen said. "What's on your mind?"

"It's time," Bob said, "that we were getting started on digging through the tunnel. This fighting represents a threat to that—a very serious one if they discover that we're sending work gangs down there. They can keep picking us off if that's what they want to do. And quite aside from the fact that we all want to get out of here as fast as possible, there are at least two other good reasons why we shouldn't let anything delay us."

"What two reasons?" Johnny asked.

"Yesterday I saw several rats up on this level of the platform. The only thing that's keeping them below is the bodies that have been thrown there. But that won't last forever and I'm betting it won't be too long before they're

coming up here in droves. The second reason ties in with that. We haven't been talking about it, but I have an idea that we don't have too much ammunition left, do we?"

"No, we don't," Egen said grimly. "We've captured a lot more guns but damn little ammunition. And we are running low. I don't know exactly how long we can last, but bullets are lower than food supplies."

"I have an idea, I think," Bob said slowly. "We know that the raids have come at fairly regular intervals. And they've all been made at night, haven't they?"

Egen and Johnny nodded.

"I've been thinking about the raids," Bob went on. "I don't really believe that they're making them out of plain hostility. Maybe they're low on food. Maybe they didn't find as much food up there as we did, or maybe they rationed it poorly. But I think they're after food or something of the sort. And I'm sure that they want to get out as badly as we do. But we've never had a chance to talk to them, to even get in some kind of opening remark. Maybe if we could talk to them things could be worked out."

"You're making sense," Johnny said. "Go ahead."

"My idea is that each night we send out two groups to be on guard. One group goes up the Eighth Avenue tracks several hundred yards. We should be able to hide there well enough to not be seen. The other group can be at the station. I'd say we'd need at least fifty men in each group. Then when they do come from Grand Central, the first group lets them pass. When they're in between the two groups, we call on them to surrender."

"You think they will?" Egen asked.

"I think so," Bob said. "Once they realize they're surrounded and outnumbered."

"They might at that," Johnny said. "But I think maybe we ought to have three groups. The third group could be fanned out and throw lights on them when they get there. It might work. Then what?"

"Then we tell them we have a way to get out, but that we all have to work together to make it. If they are short of food we offer to share with them. And we turn the whole group free to go back and tell the others."

"After taking their guns away from them," Egen said drily. "I don't know. I'm not so sure it'll go that smoothly,

but I'm still for it. We can't go on the way we have for much longer. If we run out of ammunition before they do, they can handle us any way they want to."

"We'll start it tonight," Johnny said.

They spent the rest of the afternoon organizing their three groups for that night. Bob was put in charge of the group that would go up the tracks, while Johnny and Egen would be with those who were at the station. One of the other cops was put in charge of those who would be armed with flashlights as well as guns. It was agreed that Bob would give the signal once they had gotten far enough past him.

Immediately after the meal that night, they went and took up their posts. It was a long and dull vigil in which nothing happened. Finally, when their watches revealed that it was once again day, Johnny and Egen called the others in. They went back to Gimbels and slept that day.

That night they went out again. Bob led his fifty men up the tracks for about three hundred yards. Again he scattered them around and ordered them to be quiet. Even though they'd be close they'd be safe for the Grand Central men wouldn't be using lights.

It seemed as if they'd been there for an unendurable length of time when there was a quiet hiss from one of the men. Bob strained to concentrate on sounds and finally heard scuffling of some sort. In a few minutes it became more defined as the sound of many men walking. He wished there were some way to signal the others, but they'd just have to wait until they could hear the sounds themselves. He waited, his heart beating rapidly.

Then the men were on them, moving past. They moved without a sound save the scuff of their feet against the ties between the tracks. Occasionally a man would stumble, but even that was done quietly.

It was impossible to see anything, but Bob tried to estimate how long the line of men were by the sounds as they passed. When finally the last ones slipped by him he thought they were stretched out over almost a hundred yards.

He touched the man next to him, knowing the touch would go down the line and they would follow, then got up and walked after the men. He counted his steps, trying to cover a yard with each one, and when he reached

seventy-five he again touched the man behind him. He waited long enough for the signal to pass along.

"Put your hands up and stand still," he shouted.

At the same moment fifty flashlights sprang into being from fifty different spots and he heard Johnny Larson yell from the front of the line.

The group of men were milling in the light. One gun went off.

"Get your hands up," Bob yelled again, "and you won't be hurt. You're completely surrounded."

That fact must have penetrated the men for suddenly most of the hands shot up in the light. There were guns in many of the fists, but they were making no attempt to use them. After a moment of hesitation the other hands also raised.

"All right," Johnny Larson shouted. "Come over to the platform one at a time and give me your gun. Then climb up on the platform."

Slowly the line began to move ahead. When they were finally all on the platform, Bob's group and the ones with the flashlights moved on and climbed up off the tracks. The lights revealed a mass of sullen faces.

"There are ninety of them," Egen said. "Go ahead, Randall. It's your idea."

"Okay," Bob said. He stepped closer to the men lined up against the wall of the station. "Is there one of you who was in charge?"

There was a moment of silence and then a heavy-set man stepped forward. "I'm in charge," he said.

"Why have you been attacking us?" Bob asked.

"You attacked us first," the man snapped.

"No. We sent some men up there to find if anybody was alive. You killed several of them before they could even explain why they were there. Even so, you waited a long time to start attacking us down here. Why? Low on food?"

The man waited a minute, then nodded. "We're low on food. You seem to have plenty. At least all of you look well fed."

"We have some," Bob said. "We'll share it with you—if we need to."

"What do you mean if you need to? You mean if we force you."

"No, I don't mean that at all. I mean if any of us need the food, you couldn't force us to give it to you. We're too well armed and you're at a disadvantage considering where you have to attack us. All you can do is bother us so much that none of us may be able to escape from here."

"There's no way to escape anyway," the man said sullenly. "It'll be a long time before anybody can. Too long. We sent a guy up a week ago. He was gone two days before he came back. He died today."

"There is a way out," Bob said. "We know about it and we can all get out before too long. But we need your help. If we can all do it together, we'll make it. If we keep on fighting, no one will make it."

"What's the way to get out?"

"There is a way," Bob said. "It requires some work. And we also have an instrument for measuring radiation and we have a physicist who knows how to use it."

"You're trying to trick us," the man said.

Bob shook his head. "No, we're not trying to trick you in any way. We're going to let all of you go. You can go back and tell the rest of your people what we've said. Then if you want to you can all bring your food and come down here and we'll pool all the food. And we can be out of here in one or two weeks."

"Where would we go?"

"All of the country isn't destroyed. We know that, too. We've heard radio signals, although we can't signal back. And we've seen one airplane. It was too high to catch any signal—not that it would have done any good."

"It's still a trick," the man said. "It's a trick to get our food."

"Johnny," Bob said, "take this man and show him our food supply. The rest of us will wait here."

Johnny flicked on his flashlight and motioned the man to walk ahead of him. The man hesitated a minute, then turned and walked away. Johnny followed him and they soon vanished into the darkness beyond.

The rest of them waited without talking. It was half an hour before they saw the bobbing light coming toward them. It blinked on and off three times, then stayed on.

"You have more food than we do," the man admitted when he was once more standing in front of Bob.

"How much food do you have?"



"Enough for about a week. No more."

"We believe that we have enough for four weeks. So between us we will certainly have enough for everyone for two weeks. And we can be out of here by then."

The man stared back uncertainly.

"None of us have much choice," Bob said gently. "If we don't get out soon, the rats will take over."

"They've already partly moved in on us," the man admitted. "We were mostly camped down on the lower train tracks in Grand Central and we had to move to a higher level."

"That's your choice. Go on back and tell your people the story. We'll wait to hear from you."

"But if you come down here," Egen broke in, "you'll all have to surrender your guns."

"I don't know," the man said.

"All our people don't have them either," Johnny Larson said. "Your leaders will be permitted to keep their guns, just as we do, but no one else."

"All right," the man said, "we'll report. I personally think you're right, but I can't say what will be done." He waited a minute. "May we go now?"

"Go ahead," Bob said, waving toward the subway tracks.

They were silent as the men filed between them and one by one dropped down on the tracks. They walked away without once looking back.

"What do you think?" Egen asked as they started back for Gimbels.

"I think maybe they will," Johnny said.

"I do too," Bob said. "I think all of them must know that they don't have much choice even though they may not have faced up to it. Putting it into words may make them see that they've got everything to win and nothing to lose."

"I hope so," Egen grunted.

The night was almost over by the time they got back to Gimbels. Johnny Larson insisted on taking the first watch of the ones split between him and Bob. The latter went over and sat against the wall. He was too worked up, too full of thoughts to try to sleep. He watched until he saw Dr. Ruth Shawn stirring and waking up. He went over to her.

"Sorry to start your day so early," he told her, "but let's get our morning rations and get moving. We've got work to do."

"What kind of work?" she asked.

"We're going back and check the tunnel. We're going to start work on it at once, but we'll try to keep it as safe as possible."

"It would be safer to wait two more weeks."

"We can't," he said. "We've got radiation on one side of us and rats on the other. I think the radiation is less dangerous."

She got up without another word. The two of them got their morning rations among the first and then went together down the passageway. This time she went with him to the tunnel itself.

"Well," she said, "outside there's only one roentgen per hour, which is not too bad. The rubble blocking the tunnel is higher and may be even more so the farther you go. I can't tell. But I guess you could start."

"How long can each group work?"

"Because of what we don't know inside the tunnel, limit each one to three or four hours. I think they'll be safe then."

"How do you think it'll be on the other side?" he asked.

"I don't know. We may be moving toward a ground zero or away from one. I'll have to wait until we get there to tell you—if we get there."

"We'll get there," he said firmly.

They went back to Gimbels. They had been back an hour or two when a small group arrived from Grand Central. They came to announce that the plan had been accepted and that the entire group was on its way, bringing what food and lights they had.

They were arriving for the next few hours, somewhere in the neighborhood of two thousand of them. While everyone else was busy getting them settled and setting up a discipline that would work for all, Bob Randall was even busier lining up work teams and finding the proper tools.

So insistent was he that the first work was started that same night.

## Chapter Twenty

**B**OB RANDALL had just made the fortieth mark on the wall when they brought him the news. The men had just broken through the last of the rubble blocking the tunnel under the river. To make sure they had walked far enough through the tunnel to see the small hole of daylight at the other end.

"What about water?" he asked them.

"There's some," one of the men said. "Maybe about eight inches at the deepest point. Parts of the tunnel are cracked, but it's still holding."

Bob hurried off to get things organized. Even though some of the planning had been done in advance, it was still quite a job. They decided to risk not carrying anything with them, even the food. They might have enough just to get themselves through what could turn out to be a long march. So that morning everyone had a triple ration of food and they prepared to leave the place that had been their home for the past six weeks.

Of the original group that had taken shelter in the Thirty-fourth Street station, there was now close to three thousand left. And there were almost two thousand people from Grand Central. It was decided that for comfort they would march out no more than three abreast.

At the head of the first to start were Ruth Shawn, Bob and Nancy, Herbert and Connie. Just before leaving Gimbel's Bob flashed his light around the platform beyond for a last look. From somewhere near the stairs leading to the subway the light was reflected from several pairs of gleaming eyes. The next occupants were ready to move in. Bob turned and marched away without looking back again.

They marched down through the passageway and behind them the line grew and stretched out, the flashlights and lanterns along the line making them look like thousands of giant fireflies. They went through the huge terminal, downstairs and along the tracks until they finally reached the yard with its blinding daylight. They picked their way

across the yard, the line stringing out behind them, and entered the tunnel. Again the lights came into use as darkness closed about them again.

It seemed like a long walk, but Bob estimated that it was probably less than two miles before they once more sighted daylight ahead of them where the tunnel ended. They reached it and came out into the air again and behind them others plodded into the sunlight.

"How much?" Bob asked Ruth Shawn.

"One roentgen per hour," she answered. "The same as it was in the yard."

They had come out in a small city. Here it seemed that all the buildings were still standing, but they didn't have to investigate to know that there were no other living things there. It had the same quietness that Bob had felt when he'd gone up to look at New York City.

"Anybody know what this is?" he asked.

"Weehawken," Herbert said from behind him. "It was here that Aaron Burr killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel."

"That was just what I needed to know," Bob said. He laughed, a little too loudly, but he could feel some of the tension leaving his muscles.

He'd had no plans beyond emerging from that tunnel, but now he decided that they should go ahead until they found some place they could all gather until everyone was out of there and the next step could be planned.

They walked on past the town until they reached a huge field. Bob led the way into it and the people began to slowly pour in. Most of them looked around blankly, then sat down, but there were some who threw themselves on the grass as though they would embrace it.

It was a long wait until they were all gathered in the field. Then Johnny and Rita and Egen made their way to the spot where Bob sat with those who had accompanied him. Three or four of the leaders from Grand Central joined them, but all were subdued as though just being away from the subway was enough of a miracle to quiet them.

Bob looked at Ruth Shawn when they were all gathered there. "All right," he said softly, "tell us what you can. Will we be able to walk out of the radiation here?"

"I don't think so," she said. "Not in time. I think we

can assume that there was a wind from the east when the bombs were dropped. That would mean the radiation would spread this way maybe a hundred miles, maybe much more. One roentgen per hour, which is what it is here now, is relatively safe but not safe enough for us to walk that far."

"How long can we take this?" Bob asked.

"A long time without being killed," she said. "But one day and one night will mean that each of us has had what is considered an acute exposure. It would certainly be better if no one had to stay any longer than that."

"Then we have to try to signal," Bob said. He gestured toward the deserted town. "There is only one way."

"Yeah," Johnny said. "Let's go."

They grinned at each other and walked away toward the town. It took them only a few minutes to reach it. They spent a few more minutes investigating. They could see that those who had left had done so hurriedly; there were some who had not left. Their bodies had remained in the houses and on the streets.

They soon found a couple of buildings that would easily burn and set fire to them. As the columns of black smoke began to rise into the air, they turned and went back to the field.

It was a long wait while the town burned, sending huge clouds of smoke high into the air. Then late that afternoon a plane flew over. It flew low, then dipped its wings and flew away. It was almost dark before they again heard the roar of motors. This time it was a huge transport plane. The pilot made a pass at the field and Bob divined what he wanted. They soon had all the people off around the edge of the field. The big plane came in again, touched the ground and lumbered to a stop.

There was a concerted rush toward the plane, but Bob and Johnny got there first and faced the crowd with their submachine guns just as the plane door opened and the pilot appeared. The sight of the two men and the guns had been enough to jar the crowd to a halt and temper their enthusiasm. But the sight of the pilot started them all talking at once. It took Johnny and Bob several minutes to shout them down.

"But he hasn't told us anything yet," someone shouted.

"He hasn't had a chance," Johnny shouted back. He

looked up at the pilot and grinned. "I think they want to know what's happened—about the war, that is. Once they know I think they'll quiet down all right."

"There isn't any war," the pilot said. "It lasted only a couple of hours. They destroyed New York City and Washington. We destroyed Moscow and Leningrad. Then peace was declared. I guess it scared everybody. Anyway, all fission and fusion weapons are being turned over to U.N. control now."

Something like a giant sigh went up from the crowd.

"Who's in charge here?" the pilot asked. "You two guys?"

"I guess so," Johnny said.

"Where the hell you people from?"

"New York City."

The pilot whistled. "How'd you last this long?"

"In the subways."

"Got any cases of radiation sickness?"

"No."

"Okay. We'll get you out of here as fast as we can. But it'll take quite a while to ferry all of you out. I brought some ground lights so we can mark out a landing field. Got a few extra hands we can use?"

"Ought to have," Johnny said with a grin. He and Bob soon picked out a bunch of men and brought them up to the plane. The pilot told them what to do and began to pass out the lights. The crowd was cleared off the center of the field and the lights were soon placed.

"Okay, start loading them," the pilot said. "There'll be another plane along any minute."

"Where are you taking us?" Bob asked.

"They've fixed up a couple of camps in Virginia. But there haven't been too many survivors to put in them. Start them coming."

Just then someone broke out of the crowd and came running across the field toward the plane. As he drew nearer, Bob saw it was Smathers.

"Look," Smathers said directly to the pilot, "my name is Smathers. I'll be going on this first plane. I've got important financial interests around the country. If they haven't been destroyed, I have to get out and see that everything is all right."

"I don't know anything about it, Mac," the pilot said.



"I only fly this thing. These two boys will tell you when you're going, I guess."

Smathers kept his gaze on the pilot. "Oh, they did a good enough job, I think, but that's all over. I've got to get out of here. You're not an army pilot. What line do you work for?"

"I used to work for Pan American."

"That's great. I have a charge account with them. I'm not sure that I have my credit card with me, but—"

"Now I work for Uncle Sam," the pilot said flatly.

"I'll give you a hundred dollars," Smathers said.

"If you're in a hurry, Mac," the pilot said, "there's a road over there. All you got to do is walk two or three hundred miles and you'll be out of this zone."

"But I'm sick," Smathers protested.

"In the head," Bob said. "Get back off the field."

"I—I—"

"Get," Johnny said, gesturing with his gun.

Smathers looked from one to the other, then turned. "I'll get both of you," he said. "You can't treat me this way and get away with it." But he went on trudging back to the crowd.

Johnny and Bob soon had their people lined up and the first plane was loaded and took off. A couple of minutes later another plane appeared.

Throughout the night the airlift went on. No sooner would one plane be loaded than another would take its place and then follow it into the dark sky. Reversing the procedure they'd used for coming through the tunnel, they put themselves in with the last load leaving the field. Nancy Lynn, Rita Barnes, Connie Lomer and Herbert Sanders had insisted on staying with them and they all boarded the plane together.

Later the big plane came down on an improvised field in Virginia. On the other side of the field there were a number of quonset huts. They were marched over to the nearest one. There they turned in their guns, gave all the pertinent information about themselves and were examined by a team of doctors. The girls were assigned to one hut and the men to another.

"We should have you straightened out before too long," an officer told them. "Those of you who have relatives elsewhere in the country may soon be able to join them."

We'll notify them as soon as we can. Arrangements will be made as quickly as possible for the rest of you to leave the camp and locate somewhere else. Any questions?"

"Can I make a long-distance call?" Rita asked.

"I think it can be arranged. A relative?"

"No, but I have a friend in Chicago. Wouldn't he be permitted to come here and get me? He has his own plane."

"I see no reason why not," the officer said. "I believe he'll have to make some statement about accepting responsibility for your welfare."

"Oh, he'll do that," she said with a little smile. "Where can I make the call?"

"The fourth quonset hut down."

"Thank you," she said. She started to move past Johnny. "Pardon me, please."

"Sure," Johnny said.

When she was away from the group, she turned to look at them with a tight little smile. "I want to thank all of you," she said. "You've been very nice." She turned and walked away.

Bob looked at Johnny who shrugged. "I had that figured," he said softly. "She likes muscles only when she needs them. No damage done."

The little group moved away from the hut in which they had been examined and stood outside in the sunshine. Johnny nudged Bob with his shoulder. "Look down there," he said.

A few yards away a group of men were standing together talking. A slight figure hovered at the edge of the group. When he turned, Bob recognized him as Eddie Herman.

"Someone else going back to his old life as if nothing had happened," Johnny said. "There'll be a lot of them who won't have learned anything."

"But how can anyone not have learned something from what we went through?"

"They'll find a way."

"Then we should find a way to make them remember," Bob said.

Johnny shrugged.

"Well," Bob said, grinning, "here's two people who learned something even if it's not what we were talking

about." He pointed to Connie and Herbert who were holding hands as they stood there with them.

"Yeah," Johnny said.

"What are you two going to do?" Bob asked.

"The first thing," Herbert said, "is that we'd like to get married again."

"Again?"

"Yes. We had a minister in the subway marry us but of course we had no license."

"And I think I'm pregnant," Connie said shyly.

"So you see," Herbert said, "we have to start making plans right away."

"I have an idea that you two will do all right," Bob said. "Go right to it. And bless you."

"We'll see you before any of us leave," Herbert said. They wandered off, still holding hands.

"Speaking of doing things," Bob said, "what are you going to do, Johnny?"

"I'm going to get some sleep," he said, yawning. "After that, I don't know. Get a job, I guess. See you later." He walked away.

Bob looked down at Nancy and they started walking across the field.

"You're asking everybody questions," she said. "What are you going to do?"

"I don't know," he said. "I don't want to go back into advertising. At least, I don't think I do. I'd like to do something that would have some meaning in the world, but I don't know what it can be. I think I'd like to work for something like the U.N. but I don't have the qualifications."

"I don't know," she said. "I think you have the qualifications for being a good person and maybe it doesn't make any difference what you do. If you have those qualifications I think you can make any job meaningful. If you hadn't worked on that campaign about New York City and if you hadn't been interested in what you were doing, a lot of us who are now alive might have died."

"Maybe," he said. "Anyway, I thought I'd try to go to Chicago. I used to know a few people there and it might be a good place to start. I'll need some kind of a job right away, I suppose."

"I like the way you think and the things you want to

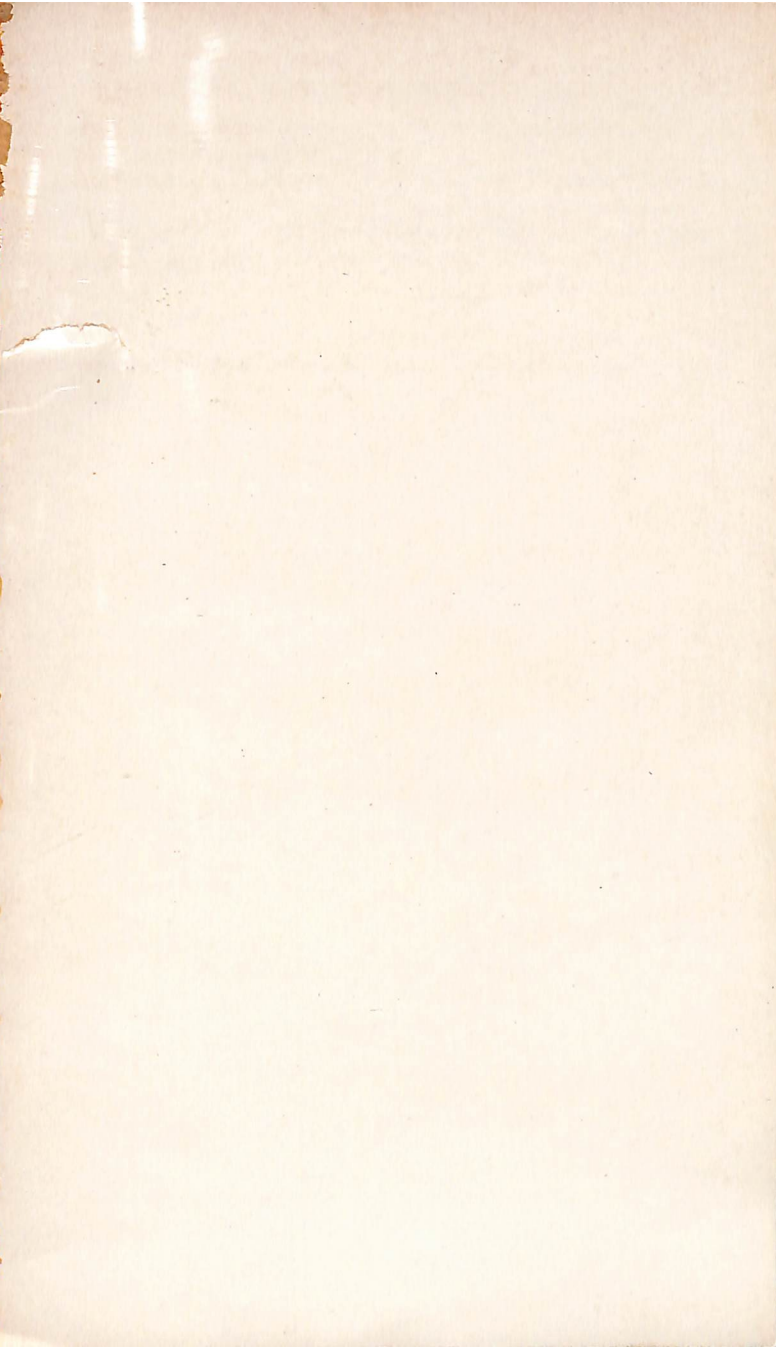
do," Nancy said. She made her voice deliberately light. "Mind of I tag along and see how part of it comes out?"

"No," he said slowly. "I think I would like that. I think I would like that very much."

He reached down and took her hand as they walked toward the huts to which they had been assigned.

THE END

*of an Original Gold Medal Novel by*  
Richard Foster





THE REST MUST DIE  
Richard Foster

The people trapped on the subway platforms and trains looked at one another like beasts in the jungle—fear, hunger, lust and the desire to kill naked in their eyes...

Just a few hours before the wavering wail of the air raid siren had sounded, as it had so many other days.



Only this time it had been the real thing. And New York City had been wiped out in one blinding white flash.

Now the small number of men left began their terrible battle for food and survival. For the few women left them.

The law of the jungle was supreme: Kill or be killed. Take or be taken.

